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TALKS ON

“WHO AM I ?”

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Swami Dayananda



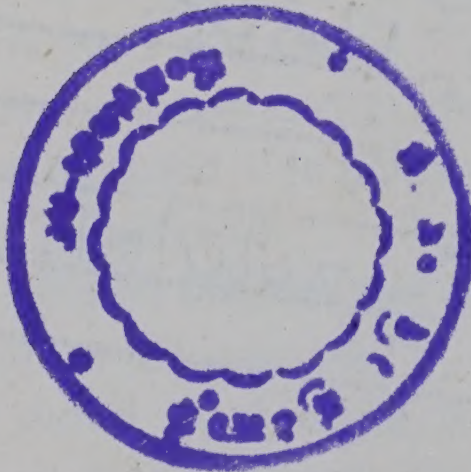


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By  
SWAMI DAYANANDA



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## PREFACE

Swami Dayanandaji is a *mahātmā* as well as an outstanding teacher of Vedanta. Swamiji expounds the most profound truths in a simple language, understandable by a layman, thus making a very difficult subject simple. Without departing from the tradition, Swamiji nevertheless communicates the subtle principles of Vedanta in a logical manner which can convince a modern educated man. Superb logic, minute analysis, scholarly depth and an authenticity arising from clarity of the vision—this is Swami Dayanandaji.

Gujarat University organised three talks by Swamiji during November 28-30, 1980 under the auspices of Shri Chhaganlal Gopaliji *śāṅkara darśana* Lecture Series. The topic was "Who am I?" This amazing question forms the very basis of life and in fact, all the endeavours and struggles of man can be traced to an innate desire to get the answer to this question. No knowledge or experience can be gained without "I" being involved in it and so "I" forms the basis of all the knowledge and experiences in life. The life is understood when "I" is understood. Life gains a new meaning and direction when the "I" is known.

But I am not an isolated entity; I am very much a part of the world and therefore to know the "I", I should also know the nature of the world. And world is a creation which carries the signature of the creator. So to understand the world, the nature of the creator or the Lord must also be enquired into.

In the three talks, Swamiji presents a clear analysis of the nature of "I" or the individual, the world and the Lord. And these are not three different entities although at the moment that is how I feel. In reality, the individual, the world and the



Lord are the manifestations of one Reality, *brahman*. So the knowledge of "I" is to know me as *brahman*.

The talks were recorded, transcribed and edited by the sincere students and seekers at Ahmedabad and originally published in English by Gujarat University. We are very grateful to the University for permitting Sri Gangadhareswar Trust to reprint the book in English and also to publish it in other languages. This generous attitude on the part of the University will make this beautiful work available to a much larger and a wider group of people.

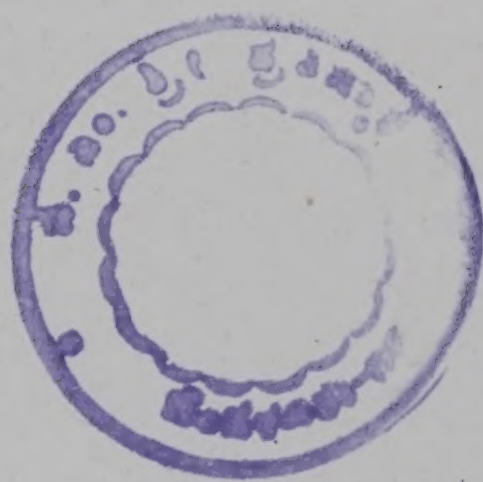
Adhyatma Vidya Mandir,  
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22-10-1983

**Swami Veditatmananda**

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## I. THE SEEKER AND THE SOUGHT

### A Life of Seeking

Nobody loves division. Any division, psychological division for that matter, yields a cause for conflict and also a lack. When I find myself a seeker seeking something desirable, I cannot rest content being a seeker, for the sought, the desirable is away from me. The very fact that I seek, is because what is to be gained is away from me, is something, from which I am apart. And therefore until the sought is gained, the seeking goes on. While I seek, I apprehend a possibility of not getting what I want, and thus there is a fear. And there always are many contenders for the same end and so I have further fears. Thus a life of seeking is a life of conflicts and strifes. Once the desired end is gained—whatever be the end—for the time being the seeker-sought are no more separate. They fuse into one experience of gain; in the gain of the sought the seeker ceases to be. The cessation of seeking is what we call the experience of joy, of happiness wherein the seeker-sought fuse into one flame of fulfilment. And so it is clear: a division, a gulf, a separation, a chasm between the seeker and the sought, is not something which we can brook, or happily accept.

If we analyse our life and experiences, we discover that we have always been seeking one thing or the other and the "*sought*" is the most predominant factor in our life. Until the desired end is gained, I cannot rest content. When one end is gained, again I seek. Something else becomes the object of my desire, of my seeking. When that is gained there is for a moment a relaxation, a fulfilment, a relief from sorrow, from conflict, from strife... and again there is another object in the very place where there was one before, as a "*sought*".



Again I seek. Thus life has been one of seeking desirable ends.

What is looked upon as desirable, as very important at one time, may change, in course of time, to become an undesirable thing or a thing to which I am indifferent. As a child also I had sought things; they were only play-things. As I grew up, I gave up those ends and in that place I found different ends to seek. Thus the desires are changing and therefore the objects of desire also change. But one thing that does not change is the "*desirer*". The desirer always remains the same.

In Indian music as you know there is always a *tānpurā* behind the vocalist and this *tānpurā* sets the *śruti*, the pitch. The singer has different *rāgas*, melodies to sing: now *bhupālī*, now *bhairavī*. Like this he goes on changing the melodies. Each melody has its own scales. The musician improvises new phrases of musical expression within the scales of a given melody. While he is singing he keeps on changing the expressions. But one thing does not change and that is the *śruti*, the pitch that is behind, which we do not hear when the song is being rendered. The *śruti* is heard when one *rāga* ends and before the other begins.

And thus the *rāgas* keep on changing. There are melancholic *rāgas*, there are hilarious *rāgas*, there are absorbing *rāgas*, morning *rāgas*, evening *rāgas*—*rāga* galore. But then one thing that never changes is the *śruti* behind. That goes on and on and that is heard whenever a *rāga* stops. When the musician renders a given *rāga* and reaches the climax the audience also works up to that pitch. When the expected climax is reached, and the audience is satisfied as even the musician is, there is an applause, clapping. Then . . . the *rāga* is concluded. There is no singing for the time being. There is silence and for a few minutes we can hear the *tānpurā* that is in the background. In that



hushed silence of a fulfilled *rāga*, we do not hear singing for the time being, but we do pick up the *tanpurā*; the *śruti* in the background and then afterwards the musician again renders a new *rāga*.

The word *rāga* has got several meanings. *Rāga* means a melody. *Rāga* also means a desire, a longing. If we watch our life we find there is one thing that is constant, like the *śruti* behind and that is, I want . . . I want . . . I want . . . I want. It is a constant pitch. "What" I want is a *rāga*; that keeps on changing. That "I want" something does not change; that is *śruti*. When I was a child I wanted marbles, balloons etc. When I grew older I wanted a bicycle, then a scooter and then a house. These are the various things which keep on changing. *Rāgas* change. When the fulfilment of a given desire takes place we find there is a hushed silence, there is a moment of peace, joy, call it what you will. And then I pick up the background *śruti*, 'I want . . . I want . . .'. Again I look within to see "what" I want. A new *rāga* is born.

## The Unspelt Desire

This imagery helps us understand the life of struggles. That I want is always a constant thing; what I want varies from time to time from individual to individual. I want a particular house. That house is the most covetable thing at the moment. It is ideally situated according to me, and therefore I have an eye on the house. The house has come for sale and I go in for it. I am happy. My stars have really blessed me. And the other one who sold the house is also equally happy; he got rid of it! Stars have smiled at him too!

By the very fact that there is a buyer and a seller of the same thing, it is very clear that our *rāgas* vary. The very thing I want is the very thing the other man wants to get rid

of. I desire to buy and you desire to sell. Thus our *ragas*, our desires differ but one thing that does not differ at all is that I *desire*, that you *desire*.

At the bottom of all the desires there is one desire, that is an unspelt desire 'I want . . . I want . . . I want . . .'. It is an unqualified desire like a simple *śruti* which is not a *rāga*. That *I want* is an unspelt want, an undefined want, an intangible want. But I definitely know that "I want". That "I want" shows, there is an uneasiness about myself. All is not well with me. I want to become a different person, a person who is free from that original want. Whenever my mind enjoys that silence, as I experience at the fulfilment of a desire for the time being; well, at that time I find myself to be one who is not a desirer. I find myself to be a person who is not wanting. But soon enough I find myself to be a wanting person. There is an uneasiness about myself. There is an all-pervasive sense of dissatisfaction which seems to be the very basis of all my strife and struggle; and according to my likes, my desires keep on changing. One man wants to rule the kingdom, the other man wants to get rid of it. There were also kings like Siddhartha, the Buddha who renounced kingdom. There were great rich men who renounced the property seeking something and there were people who wanted the property which the other renounced. A saint, a renunciate seeks through renunciation—he is also seeking something; the other one is seeking something through getting hold of. Therefore, our scriptures single out this particular problem, discern this particular problem as a human problem. It is not the problem of just any living being; it is the problem of every human being.

There are two types of problems: First problem of a living being is the problem of survival, simple survival—like a plant also wants to survive. If it is growing under the shade of another tree it bends to seek the sunlight. It goes all over



with its roots in search of the sap, the food to keep itself going. Similarly an animal also wants to survive. Human being also wants to survive. In fact, the urge to survive is common to every living being. The animals survive without much ado; they are able to survive without a government, without courts, without advocates, without the police, etc. Thus the animals struggle to survive and we are also struggling to survive. I want food, I want shelter—these are all ordinary problems—problems of the living beings. Then there is the biological urge, which also the animal has. It propagates its species and man also propagates his species. When that is done, then what? Then in fact, after we give him food, give him shelter etc., at the end of the whole thing he will ask, "Now what shall I do?" This is the second problem.

This second problem is not the problem of the animal. From the animal's stand-point, I suppose, its life is fulfilled if it is able to survive and propagate. It always lives upto the expectations of nature. Programmed as every animal is, it lives its full life completely. We do not see an unethical donkey. Even if it happens to kick a man, it has not committed an offence. In fact, the man who got the kick will be laughed at as to why he went behind the donkey. He should know better.

### **Instinct Vs. Self-consciousness**

But when it comes to a human being, there is some plus in him which makes him different from other living beings. And that plus factor is the most evolved mind which is perhaps rudimentary in the plants, and relatively more evolved in the animals. In the human being, we find that the mind is highly evolved. It not only makes him conscious of his urges and

the world of things and beings for fulfilling the urges but it also makes him conscious of himself as the independent agent of action. There is a grammar *sūtra* which means that a doer, an agent of action is always an independent person. Action initiates from him because he is conscious of himself. Being independent he has the freedom to perform an action, or not to perform it or to perform it differently.\*

If a donkey feels like kicking—whether you are the owner or someone else—it kicks. A donkey acts on instinct. We would not call a donkey an independent agent of action, even though the donkey performs the action of kicking. In colloquial usage we do say, “The donkey kicked.” Grammatically it is right. But did the donkey really choose to kick? If it has the freedom of choice then it should meditate, it should deliberate. Should I kick this fellow or not? Does he deserve a kick and if so what kind of a kick? Shall I just threaten him or really kick him? Should I use my left leg or right leg? Such a deliberation does not occur in case of a donkey; it felt like kicking and it kicked.

When it comes to a human being, the situation is different. Suppose like a donkey—sometimes man does behave like a donkey—a man feels like kicking. He lifts his right leg and is about to kick the other person. Then all of a sudden he realises the size of the other man and he quietly withdraws! His reason prevails over the instinct, the impulse and he withdraws from the very action he wanted to perform. This capacity makes him a self-conscious being who is capable of choosing his actions, his means. He has the freedom to kick, not to kick or to postpone the action for a more favourable occasion! This freedom, this choice makes him a person who is conscious of himself as an actor, who exercises a choice in performing his actions.



It is this self-consciousness which makes man a different being. There is a self-complex too. Naturally since man is conscious of himself he cannot but make a judgement about himself. Since I am conscious of myself, I am aware of myself, I begin to look at myself — *'WHO AM I?'* And certainly I have a judgement, without a question of course. Nobody enquires before making a conclusion. It is the nature of the intellect to conclude. When I look within I discover a sense of incompleteness, a sense of limitation. If I see myself as a limited being, a wanting being, naturally I cannot stand myself and therefore I desire to be a different person, so that I can be acceptable to myself.

In fact when man seeks recognition outside, when he wants people to recognise him, it is not that he wants recognition from outside. He wants recognition from himself. His opinion about himself is so demeaning that he wants somebody to give him recognition, so that he feels he is acceptable. When somebody expresses love at him, he wonders in disbelief because he is quite sure that he does not deserve to be an object of anybody's love. That is why even after 20 years of marriage this question remains, "Do you really love me?" This question goes on hanging. Do you know, why? Because nobody really accepts himself or herself as an acceptable person and therefore when anybody says, "I love you", he or she cannot accept it without a pinch of salt. "How can I be the object of your love?" Underneath there is a self-condemnation. We have an opinion about ourselves which is not self-edifying or in keeping with our status. It is a self-demeaning opinion and that opinion I cannot avoid as long as I find myself a wanting person; a person with whom all is not well.

It is this problem which is peculiar to the human being and by the very fact that the problem exists, it has got to be solved. If there is a problem, there should be a solution too. And it is

not that I cannot solve it, because now and then I see myself as an acceptable person in spite of my limitations. I have physical limitations. I do not have the advantage of a bird which has wings. I do not have the advantage of a dog which has a better sensory perception in terms of smelling. Thus each animal has something peculiar and all these capacities of the animals, I do not possess. Again spatially I am limited. If I am here, I am not elsewhere. Timewise also I am limited, because there was a time when I was not. And I always wish that I were also born alongwith Gandhiji so that I would also have become a *tyāgī*, a renunciate. So I wish *I were before*. Thus as a human being my perceptive capacities are limited, spatially I am limited, timewise also I am limited. Psychologically I am always limited. Emotionally I am not always in the same poise—I like and I dislike, I love and I hate, I am quiet and I am agitated. It is not one simple disposition of love and sympathy and compassion and mercy. There is a constant change, which limits me psychologically. My intellectual accomplishments are also limited. The more I come to know, the more I discover what all things I have yet to know. I discover the areas of my ignorance and therefore intellectually I am limited. Thus at all the levels—physical, emotional and intellectual—I am limited. But in spite of all these limitations I do see myself a happy person when there is a good turn in my life.

Such terms may be very few and far between but they are never totally denied to a human being—however tragic the life may be. As a child when I wanted a balloon and got it from my father, I had a moment of joy. As a youngster when I got a scooter I again had the same moment of joy. There was always a time when I wanted something and I got it. Or even without wanting and getting the things, just one fine morning I look at the sky and the blue sky seems to be beautiful and bright. Well, in the night I see the stars. They



seem to speak a lot to me and I am happy with the set-up in which I find myself. Thus without my longing for anything, without my getting anything, just being where I am I look around. Everything is bright and beautiful and I find myself at peace with the set-up in which I am. There are moments when I hear a song which is a meaningful song or a simple melody of music. That simple harmony of sounds brings about a complete resolving of all my conflicts in the mind, and all those rhapsodial musics of my mind. They are all absorbed into one simple melody as it were and in that very melody there is a harmony. Mind gets into the rhythm of that very harmony. I find there is absorption and at the end of it I find there is ecstasy, there is joy! Thus without much struggle I do pick up moments of joy. Who can say, "I did not have moments of joy in my life?" And at those moments, please tell me—did this person find himself *a wanting person*? No. When I pick up a moment of joy do I see myself a seeker still? No. Is there a *sought* separate from me, the *seeker*? No. The seeker-sought distinction just resolves.

Some evening when I see the stars in the blue sky I am happy. There is a duality. I am the seer of the star and the star is seen. When I see the star and find that I am happy, is there a division? Well, there is a duality no doubt, but no division. A star is seen and there is a seer of the star. But the seer-seen seem to merge, resolve into one flame of joyous experience and this is what we call *advaita*. *Advaita* is not the denial of duality; it is an experience of resolving the division, the seeker-sought division, the wanting-wanted division.

When I see the toothless mouth of a laughing child there is an object seen. In that open mouth I see the heavens! The set-up, the situation is there. There is a joy. There is a clearance of all my conflicts and thus I experience an absence of division in spite of duality. I do not take the child as myself. I see the child laughing for no reason, lying on its

back looking at the ceiling. It goes on laughing and when I look at that child I too laugh for no reason. Just an innocent laughter. I myself become a child looking at the child because a child laughs not for a joke. The child laughs not for any great achievement. It just laughs. The child just lies on its back and looking at the ceiling goes on laughing. For what? My God, I do not know. The laughter comes from somewhere. Eventhough my heart is so heavy with all its burdens, somehow all the burdens clear up and I too laugh alongwith the child. What a relief! Similarly the sight of the stars, or hearing the music—such a set-up as this does not really seem to destroy my joy, my happiness. Do you know why? Because there is a harmony. There is no division. The seer-seen duality does remain but there is no division of the seeker and the sought.

If I wanted that child to be different I could not have laughed at it or laughed with it. If I wanted the sky to be different, I could not have been happy with the sky. If I wanted the sun to be different at the time of sunset, I could not have been happy with the sunset. How can I be happy with the set-up when I want it to be different? I am happy only when I do not want a set-up to be different from what it is; for then there is no seeker, there is no sought. Thus in spite of all my limitations, I see myself, at such moments, as a person who is free. How can I then give up the hope, the struggle to be free, to be happy?

### **A Whole Person—Not A Seeker**

Experientially if I did not have the knowledge of being free, of being happy, I would not have been able to come to the judgement that I am unhappy. Nor could I ever say that all is not well with me. To make a judgement I must have a norm.



No judgement can be made without a norm. An action is lawful or unlawful if there is a law. If there is no law, there is nothing lawful or unlawful. If I do not have the norm, I cannot judge whether something is good or bad. To judge, I must know what the standard is. Let us take the example of coffee. If I have a standard cup of coffee in my mind, I can judge whether this coffee that I am sipping is good coffee or bad coffee. If I have no standard for coffee in my view, how can I make a judgement about it? If this is the first time that I am tasting coffee and the host asks me, "How do you like this coffee?" I would say, "This is the first cup of coffee I am taking and I cannot make any judgement about it. This is coffee; that is all I know." But if I have had rounds of cups of coffee and in my mind there is a standard, then I can judge a cup of coffee even from the smell of it. I need not even taste it. Why? Because I have a standard to judge.

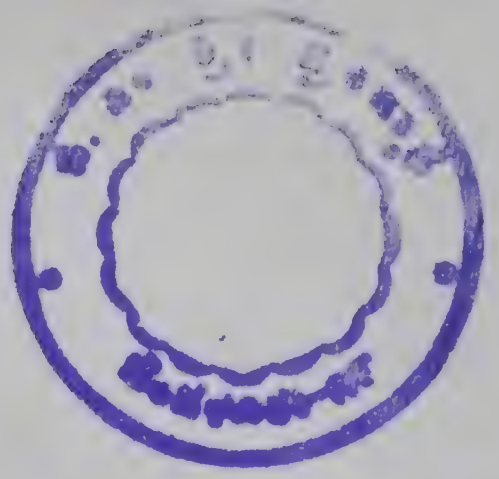
I feel that everything is not well with me, that there is some lack, there is some want. This sense of dissatisfaction itself reveals that I have some standard, I have an ideal. I know something as the most desirable; and I know it only experientially. At those moments when I pick up joy I do see myself as a whole person and not a seeker any more. At that time the seeker-sought division resolves. I find myself to be one or non-dual. Nobody loves *dvaita*, duality. Mere presence of two things does not make *dvaita*. Husband and wife, even though they are two, do not make *dvaita*. It is only when they do not agree with each other that they create *dvaita*. My two hands also do not make *dvaita*, really speaking. We do not understand what *dvaita* is and what *advaita* is. Anyway, at these moments of joy, I have this experience of seeing myself as a person who does not want any more. Hence I would like to be that person at other moments too. So I begin to struggle to become that person.

It is something like an Indian musician, who renders a

melody and has to reach the peak, the octave. He has reached that point, the *pañcama* or the 'Pa' and now he has to make a finale and the audience also is worked up. That *svara* is on the top, the *Niṣāda*, the *saptama*. He wants to reach there from *pañcama* to *saptama* and for this he has already reached a platform. But now he feels there is a frog in his throat! He has a bad throat. He has elaborately prepared the ground. He thought that the throat would clear up and he would be able to reach. But now he finds that if he tries further he would screech. He does not want to spoil his name—being a good musician he cannot accept it. So quietly he comes down with a hope of preparing himself again for the same thing. Then the throat would be clear and he would reach the point. But again he finds he is not confident. Then, do you know what he does? He simply raises his hand up and makes you all see, as if the *svara* is up there. You seem to be happy and he is also vicariously happy; for he knows his height.

Once you know your height, you cannot settle for anything less. That is what all the struggle is about. Whether it is in cooking, in writing a letter, in writing an article, in doing a job or even in typing a letter—once you know your height, you cannot settle for anything less, because you know you can do better. You have done better in the past. She has cooked so well, no doubt, that everybody praises her cooking. But she is shy because she knows her height. Others do not know. For them this is fine. But she has done better in the past and therefore she cannot really accept these praises. She just shies away. Once we know our height we cannot settle for anything less.





## A Non-dual Experience

A seeker does not want to remain a seeker. I do not mind being a seeker of knowledge but not a seeker of joy through knowledge. I can be a seeker of wealth but not a seeker of joy through wealth. I can be a seeker of children but not a seeker of joy through children. Because when children come, problems also come along. When wealth comes problems also come; previously nobody came with a receipt book for donation but now so many people come to my house! Previously I never kept accounts; I did not know how to write accounts. But now I should file income tax returns. So wealth comes, problems come, miseries would also come. Thus if I seek joy through power, children, etc., I am in for constant disappointment. That seeking never ends. Even though I pick up joy when I gain something that I wanted, that is incidental. At that moment I am no more a seeker. For the time being one *rāga* is over. In the applause of fulfilment of that *rāga* I do not hear the background *śruti* "I want... I want...". But afterwards I do hear the *śruti* "I want... I want... I want...". For, the joy is just experiential. It just comes and goes away during experience of fulfilment. At these moments of joy, all the human beings know their height; at that time they are no more seekers. One may seek wealth for wealth's sake, children for children's sake out of joy, but not for the sake of joy. Thus I know experientially that I am neither the sought, nor am I the seeker. I become both seeker and sought resolved into one. Is it not true?

Whenever you seek something, there is a division of seeker and sought. When both the seeker-sought come together, resolved into one flame of experience, there is only one joy. There is neither seeker nor sought. In that experi-

ence I see myself a different person altogether. Once I have seen myself thus, how can I settle for anything less?

Therefore the problem of human being is not the lack of experience of *advaita*; the problem is of the lack of the knowledge of *advaita*. When I go to deep sleep, there is total *advaita*. Is there any *dvaita* in sleep? A *mahārājā*, a king sleeps in the palace and a beggar sleeps on the pavement outside the palace. The *mahārājā* is given to all comforts and luxuries whereas the beggar is given to all elements. Both are sleeping. Until they fell asleep the *mahārājā* was a *mahārājā*. He was conscious of his royal problems or royal status, whatever they were. The beggar also was a beggar, looking at the sky and figuring out the stars that conspired to put him there and not inside the palace! But once the *rājā* sleeps inside the palace given to all comforts and luxuries and the beggar sleeps outside the compound given to all vagaries of elements, *deśa*-the space disappears, *kāla*-the time disappears. All their memories, all their problems disappear. Everything disappears. In fact a second thing is not there and what is there is only non-dual experience. Please tell me, is there any one who hates sleep? We may postpone sleep when we want to do something, but we never hate sleep. Do we hate sleep as such? Not at all.

Sleep is the most welcome thing. We take so much care to go to sleep. We see that the light is proper, the height of the pillow is proper, the bed is proper, the mosquito-net is down and no mosquitos inside! We just see to it that every thing is proper. Why? Because we want to have a good sleep. We always take much care when we want to enjoy something. We take so much care while going to sleep because what we are going to have is a field of enjoyment, a welcome thing. And in the morning we all know very well that it is a struggle to be out of bed. We wake up first and get up later! But between waking up and getting up there is a great war, a



conflict. In fact we begin the day with conflict. Why? Because we are reluctant to be out of a state wherein there was such a relief from sorrow, from duality, from problems. This *feel* of sleep is the most welcome thing. Thus we go to it with enthusiasm and we are reluctant to come out of it.

Therein there is *advaita*. There is no *dvaita*. Seeker-sought *dvaita* is not there. Even a perceptual *dvaita* like seer-seen, hearer and heard *dvaita* is not there. When we are sleeping we have no problem whatsoever; we may cause problems to others! But when we sleep we are free from all problems, because experience is of *advaita*.

### **Discordance Vs. Harmony**

In *advaita*, friends, there is a relief. There is a joy. We all love *advaita*. Nobody wants *dvaita*. We fight only because of *dvaita*. It takes two—not merely two, conflicting two—for a fight. It takes two for a crime. It takes two for violence. It takes two for jealousy. It takes two for hatred. It takes only one for love. Eventhough there is another, there is no division really. We accept the other person completely. There is just love, the flame of love which resolves the two into one. What a wonder! Wherever there is joy in any experience involving two or three or four or ten or millions, I tell you, there is only one. Seeker-sought division is not there.

A second thing, a conflict creates a seeker-sought division, causes a danger to me. I become a seeker of getting rid of that thing which should not be there. And thus any kind of conflict is caused only by this kind of duality. Dattatreya about whom we have heard a lot had a number of *gurus*. One of his *gurus* was a woman and do you know what he learnt from her? He went to her for *bhīksā*. He

asked for *bhīkṣā*. From the house a woman came out and said, "Sir, you please wait. I will give you *bhīkṣā*. I have to cook the food and give it to you. Will you please wait?" Dattatreya said, "O. K. I will wait." He waited there inside the house. She gave him an *āsana*, a seat, offered him water and went inside. She wanted to cook rice but the rice was not there. She had paddy, but no rice in stock. So she had to pound the paddy. She started pounding the paddy. While pounding, the bangles she was wearing on her hands were making so much noise that she felt shy. She thought that perhaps the *sādhu* would think, "I am causing trouble to her. Let me go away", and he may quietly go away. Therefore she wanted to avoid the noise made by these bangles. She started removing the bangles one by one. Dattatreya had already heard the noise of the bangles and now he happened to see her removing them. She removed one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight the ninth one she did not remove. And he wondered, why? From the other hand also she removed one-two-three . . . eight. All of them she removed, except one. The ninth one she left on the hand. He wondered, why? And she began pounding. No noise at all. Yea—Dattatreya understood. "My God! It takes two to make noise." Thus he learnt a lot of things from different sources.

When I am talking, I create a sound. Do you say that the *Swāmi* is making a noise? When somebody is singing reaching his octave, do we complain that he is making noise, 'My God, why is that fellow reaching the top!' We do not feel that way. Why? Because that is not noise. When we do not want the other person to talk and still he continues, he is making noise, really. But sound by itself is not noise. When you are listening to me, you do not realise that there is *advaita*. I will prove it later. There is *advaita*. There is only a perceptual *dvaita* but when you are absorbed in the topic there is no real *dvaita*, no conflicting *dvaita*. Thus everybody



loves *advaita*. Nobody loves *dvaita*.

When at home, if all the members are able to accommodate one another, eventhough they have different notions, opinions, tastes etc., we find there is a harmony. They love that harmony. Who wants a discordant note in a symphony? In an orchestra there are different instruments. Each of these instruments has its own tonal effect, its own form, etc. Each one enjoys its individuality but all of them merge into one pattern of symphony. There is *advaita* there in the pattern. But if one fellow goes out of tune to become predominant, he creates disharmony. That is called *dvaita*. Thus *dvaita* brings about discordance.

### **Upaniṣads: Means of Special Knowledge**

Nobody loves *dvaita*, nor do we have to make an attempt to learn about *dvaita*. We need not study *dvaita*. Which scriptures do I require to know that I am different from God, I am different from this world, I am different from everybody else? Which *Swāmī* has to come and give discourse? If there is something that is common between me and the world, between me and the *Maker* of the world, if there is something which I do not perceive then I do require that special knowledge which would make me see this fact. Inferentially I can see, but perceptually I do not see. And that fact has to be revealed by another means of knowledge which we call *upaniṣads* or *Vedānta*.

It does not take physics to know that silver is silver, copper is copper, gold is gold and iron is iron. What is required is only good eyes and our own experience to notice that the colours are different and the properties are different. We can easily see that each one is different from the other. It does not call for the knowledge of physics at all. But it

definitely takes physics to know that gold, copper or silver—whatever be the type of substance there is only one thing namely matter which is convertible to energy. Energy can become matter. For us to know the particular equation  $E=mc^2$ , it definitely takes physics. It calls for a physicist to know the *advaita* that exists among the different types of substances. What is there is one energy which alone appears differently.

Similarly to know that I am a *jīva*, an individual, that I am physically, psychologically, intellectually limited, that I am bound by my own body, mind and intellect and that I am spatially limited, that my powers are limited—what *śāstra*, scriptures do I require? What Vedānta do I require? Which *guru* do I require? I do not require a lamp for it. I have to be there, alive and awake, that is enough. My little mind is good enough to give me this knowledge. I do not require schooling or university or any kind of education for that. I require myself to be awareful, that is enough. I should not be sleeping. In sleep I have no problem any way, I have to be either dreaming or awake to know that I am isolated from every body else, that I am distinct from others; I do not require a teacher or Śaṅkara or *upaniṣad* to come and tell me that.

But if there is something common between you and me, as in case of two substances where difference is only apparent and the reality is one viz. energy, if between I, *aham*, and this, *idam*, there is something common, and the differences are only apparent, it definitely requires a *special knowledge* to know it. And it is this special knowledge that we lack. That is why we are seekers all the time.

We have experience of that special knowledge, of that special fact. In experience we find that in spite of our limitations we are *advaitins*. This becomes an ideal for me and I want to become that in terms of knowledge alone. If there is



a fact which is already an accomplished fact and if I do not know the fact, the problem is not of getting something I do not have; it is the problem of getting to know something that already is. What is unfolded by the *upaniṣads* is I, the individual (*jīva*), the world (*jagat*) and the maker (*īśvara*) of this world in which I find myself. For all the three *jīva*-the individual, *jagat*-the world and *īśvara*-the Lord, there is a common base in the vision of the *upaniṣads*. This common base is *advaita*. As said earlier *advaita* is not open for our choice. We cannot choose between *dvaita* and *advaita* because we want only *advaita*. As long as I am a seeker, separate from the sought I feel *small* by the very gap obtained between I, the seeker and the sought. Naturally I cannot stand this smallness and I want to bridge the gap, overcome the smallness by gaining the sought.

Tell me, are we interested in maintaining this seeker-sought relationship? Or, are we interested in gaining the sought so that the seeker would no longer be? I am a seeker because I want the sought. Therefore the cessation of seeking is all that I seek. In fact I do not seek for the sake of seeking. I am a seeker because I feel very small. The seeking comes from the sense of smallness, limitedness. So in the vision of the *upaniṣads* the seeker-sought difference that we see is not really there. That difference does not exist in sleep. What we call *dvaita*, is the duality that is perceptual. *Upaniṣads* accept the perceptual *dvaita* and then enquire into what exactly the sleep is. In sleep there is an identity. Experientially we gain this *advaita*. Experience of sleep is a non-dual experience. An experience of joy is also a non-dual experience. Once I experience myself as a person who is no more a seeker naturally I want to be that person. There is no choice in that I want to be free from limitations, and therefore there is no choice, in whether I should be a seeker or not. I am a seeker in order that I cease to be a seeker.

Seeking is not for the sake of seeking. And so if this is what we call non-dual or *advaita* well there is no choice. Again this *advaita*, as I told you, is not totally unknown to us. In sleep it is known experientially. And what is required is only a certain knowledge, a definite knowledge of the Self which according to the *upaniṣads* is non-dual, *advaita*.

### **I Seek Myself!**

The entire Vedanta which is otherwise called *upaniṣads* can be expressed in one sentence and that is *Tat Tvam Asi*. That thou Art. *Tat* meaning *that* stands for something and we have to understand what the meaning of *that* is. A pronoun can stand for any noun. Suppose in the street a donkey is going. If I point at it and say, "*Tat Tvam Asi*", you know what its meaning is! In *upaniṣads*, *Tat* means that which I am seeking in life. I want to be free from limitations. As we have seen, there are timewise limitations, spatial limitations, etc. I want to be free from all these limitations. That limitlessness which I seek, the freedom from limitations which I seek is *myself* in the vision of the *śruti*—not in my vision. *Śruti* means *Upaniṣad*. In my vision I am a seeker of the freedom from limitations; in the vision of the *śruti* I am already what I am seeking. Therefore *śruti* makes a statement *Tat Tvam Asi*. In this statement, *Tvam* means you and *Tat* means that which you are seeking. *Asi* is a verb of being. It is a verb which reveals a fact. Like when I say *you are*, this *are* is a verb all right, but it does not imply any action. In *I am*, *am* is a verb which does not reveal any action, unlike *he goes*, *he talks*, *he walks* etc., in all of which, some action is involved; these are verbs that reveal action. But *is*, *am*, *are*—these are not the verbs of action. They are verbs of being. And so here in this statement *Tat Tvam Asi*, Thou art



that, the verb *art* naturally reveals a fact and therefore I am not going to *become* that, because of the fact that I *am* that. In the vision of the *śruti* I want to be that which I already am. The seeking comes from self-ignorance. I cannot seek if I know this fact. I cannot seek a thing that I already have—if I know that I have it.

Nobody can ask the Lord or anybody else to give him a head over his shoulders, because he has one already. Even if I ask the Lord who has appeared before me, "Oh almighty Lord! Please give me a head over my shoulders", what answer can Lord give me? The Lord would say, "Well, I continue to be almighty in spite of my incapacity to give you what you want". "How come?" I question. Lord would reply, "Eventhough I am the Lord, I cannot give you a head over your shoulders because you have one already. If you want another one, I can give you. That is why I am almighty. I can give you one more head, but do not ask me to give you a head that you already have. I cannot give that." Even the Lord cannot give me what I already have. He can give me what I do not have. Naturally I cannot ask him to give me a head over my shoulders. I can no doubt ask of him, "Oh *bhagavan*! Please give me something in my head." And Lord may stuff it with something. But that is a different asking altogether!

Well, so it is clear that getting a thing which I already have is just impossible; nor is there a necessity. And if, there seems to be a necessity it is only because of self-disowning. A man was once reading using his reading glasses when somebody came to see him. The man lifted his glasses to the forehead and started talking to the visitor. After the visitor departed, he wanted to continue reading. So he looked for his glasses. "where are my glasses?" He searched all over. The glasses were not there on the table, in the drawer, on the floor...no where could he get them. so he started

shouting and screaming, "where are my glasses?" His children and wife, all of them stood there watching the fun. At the end of the whole show the youngest child pointed at the glasses which were on the father's forehead, and the man realised that the glasses he was searching foolishly were with him all the while!

When my glasses are with me and I still want to be the owner of the glasses then the problem arises because of my non-recognition of the thing that I possess. The owner of the glasses, the possessor of the glasses wants to be the owner, the possessor of the glasses!

This kind of seeking arises because of disowning what I possess. In the vision of the *upaniṣads* what we seek is ourself. So they point out, **You are that which you are searching!** They arrest our attention and point out, "Hey, you are that!" While thus pointing out who I am, the *upaniṣads* also take care to show exactly what I am not. By analysis, by enquiry, by *Vicāra*, they make us see that "*I am that, aham Brahma asmi.*"





## II. THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT

### World—An Object

The enquiry starts like this: To begin with, we can reduce the whole creation to two factors; One, the subject "I" and other the object "You". These two are the only things and there is no third factor in the creation. Just think. I am the subject and everything else is the object of my knowledge. The sun is an object of my knowledge. The moon is an object of my knowledge. The stars are objects of my knowledge. Similarly the earth, trees, plants, flowers, branches, roots, men, women, children are all objects of my knowledge. So all the things that I know are objects of knowledge. The things that I do not know now, they also when I come to know, will be what? Objects of knowledge. We are told by the *śruti*, by the Vedas that there are 14 *lokas*, the fields of experiences. *Bhūḥ*, *Bhuvah*, *Svah*, *Mahah*, *Janaḥ*, *Tapah*, *Satya*, are the seven *lokas* up and *Atala*, *Vitala*, *Sutala*, *Rasātala*, *Talātala*, *Mahātala*, and *Pātāla* are the seven *lokas* below. These are the 14 *lokas*, says the *śruti*. I do not know nor do you know for sure but we cannot deny them. If I say there are 14 *lokas*, you cannot deny they are not there, because you have not gone to find out whether they are there or not. Thus neither I can prove, nor can you disprove what the *śruti* says. Therefore I give the benefit of doubt to the *śruti* and accept that there are 14 *lokas*. Suppose I go to these *lokas*. Then every *loka* that I visit is going to be what? Object or subject? "Object". What we call hell—*naraka*, that also will be what? Object only. If it is subject I am *naraka*, everybody will be *naraka*! Therefore everything including hell is an object of my knowledge. Heaven also is an object of my knowledge.

## God too An Object?

Now suppose I happen to go to the heavens which is considered to be the abode of God or *bhagavan*. Rows of very faithful devotees have been waiting there for long time and they all seem dejected. But now they all are given an opportunity to see God. They are all sitting there. Somehow I have gone there out of interest and I sit somewhere in the 'n'th row in the back. And *bhagavān* gives *darśana*. All right, I look at *bhagavān*. All the devotees are quiet. There is pin-drop silence because nobody talks. There is *bhagavān* seated so I also cannot talk to anybody. Naturally all of us with our eyes upon God, look at God. How long will I look at, this way? I am also looking at God. It is nice to see God definitely. But how long? I have seen Him. Then what? That thing is over. And now I have to go near Him and see Him closely. Just another view of God. That also I can do immediately. Then I want to go behind Him also. Because when I am in front of Him, I cannot see His back. How does His back look? Does He look the same as others from the back? So I go to the other side to see God's back. And as I manage to go behind, I notice a person sitting there. Who is this fellow? My God! He is a great sinner. I know him well and also know what all things he did! Somehow he must have managed to come to the heaven! At the sight of this person I become sad even in the heaven! Right in the presence of God I am unhappy because the God seated there is an *object*. Since He is an object He can go out of my mind and that has happened already as another object has occupied my mind. Any object out of mind is out of sight. Out of sight is not necessarily out of mind but out of mind is definitely out of sight. Thus *bhagavān* comes in my mind and goes. Therefore I am definitely better than God, because I am more powerful



than God; I can dismiss God from my mind!

So understand well that this kind of God is not much different from my big uncle, who has got a number of industries, textile-mills, etc.—and feeds a number of people. Therefore, like my big uncle, God is another mighty being but not almighty. How can He be almighty when He is different from me? I have got only a limited power but that power definitely is mine and not God's. You also have got some power. Even an ant has got a little power. Therefore He is different from everything else. Thus God is another person. He is an object for me. He is just another mighty being. And so He becomes limited. We will talk about God later.

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Well, my concern at the moment is only to discuss with you the God whom we see as a person. It is one thing to invoke God in a particular form. We can invoke the Lord even in a mile-stone or in any other form. It depends upon how we look upon a symbol. But to accept that God is different from me is a different thing altogether. If He is different from me, He is an object. Therefore heaven is an object and then anything that we see or experience in the heaven is also an object. All of them will be objects alone and therefore there is only one subject viz. I. The sounds are many, the forms are many, the colours are many, the smells are many, the scenes are many, the forms of touch are many, all these are many. What I can perceive is many, cells are many, atoms are many—all these are many. But I am the only one who is aware of an atom, who is aware of all these objects, the only one awarer "I". How many "I"s are there? There is only one I. If we think of another subject, what does the subject become? The moment we think of another subject it becomes an object.

Therefore I am the subject and everything else is the object. Now you, the object may say that, "Swāmīji I look at

you and you look at me so there are two subjects." But that is not true. Because when you are looking at me, what do you really look at? The physical body. You are looking at my physical body, and similarly, I am also looking at your physical body only. That is how enquiry starts. We are looking at the physical body only. We only know the physical body. So it is indeed an object of knowledge.

### **I am not this body**

As far as the objects other than my physical body are concerned, I have no confusion whatsoever. I may mistake one object for the other, but I do not commit the error of taking an object as the subject I. That type of a mistake I do not commit at all. Does anyone commit?

My dear child and my dear wife and my dear house are the most beloved things. These are all very dear to me. But I do not say, "I am the child." When the child is born, I am not born! I see the child, I do not become the child. Nor do I commit the error of taking the child as myself. If I take the child as myself then when I feed the child I should be feeding myself too. Such a confusion does not arise.

I know the child as the child, not as myself. Confusion of taking an object for myself does not happen. Therefore the whole world other than my physical body is *ksetra*, an object which I refer to by the pronoun *this*. Therefore this tree, this plant, this sky, this star, this sun, this moon, this heaven—everything can be referred to by the pronoun *this* and none of them is referred to by the word "I". I alone can be referred to by the word "I". An object is never referred to by the word "I". It is always referred to only by the word *this*.

Now, I ask the question, "Who are you?" You say, "I am the son of so and so." That means the *son* reveals the nature



of "I". If you are only the son of so and so then you will always be son and never a father. But you are a father too. Therefore are you the son or are you the father? You cannot call yourself father without having a son. You are not a father to your father but you are father to your children. Therefore I am son with reference to somebody and father with reference to somebody else. So also I am uncle, cousin, neighbour, etc. with reference to some; friend, foe, etc. with reference to others. But with reference to myself who am I? All the previous answers are related to the physical body. Therefore I can say, I am this physical body. That is all I can say.

Why? Because in this physical body I have the "I" sense. In everything else, other than the physical body, I have *this* sense. There is this cloth which is very close to my body but I do not have "I" sense in it. I never say, "I am the cloth." I take it as *this* cloth, *my* cloth. I say these are my clothes. The clothes are not me. Nobody has this confusion. But when I touch your body, then you do not feel *your body* is touched; instead, you feel *you* are being touched, I feel I am touched. Simple. When this body is walking somewhere, it is not that somebody else is walking but then *I am walking*. If the body is tall I am tall, if it is fair I am fair, dark I am dark, fat I am fat, lean I am lean and so on. If the body is here I am here; it is not that body remains here and I walk away! So I do not leave the body. Where the body is, there I am. Therefore when the body sleeps I sleep, when the body stands I stand, when the body walks I walk, when the body is lying down, I am lying down. Whatever the body is, that I am; whatever the body does that I do. So I am the physical body.

Therefore when the question is asked, 'Who are you?' the answer should be, I am the physical body. Nothing else is me. When the body is healthy, I am healthy. When the body perishes, I perish. But this conclusion is a little too hasty.

When I say I am tall, is it not because this body is tall? Do I know the tall body or not? If I do not, then how do I say I am tall? I know that it is the body that is tall. I know the tall body which is like even knowing the sky and the stars therein. When I see a tall tree I do not say that I am tall. I do not take a tree for myself, because a tall tree is an object of knowledge. And similarly this tall body is the object of knowledge. Without it being the object of knowledge I would not know anything about it and since I know this body—tall, fat, short, etc.—naturally I am the knower of this body. On seeing a tall tree, I do not say I am tall, but seeing the tall body, I say I am tall. How do I say that? I commit an error because I do not know. That is called ignorance. If I know that I do not know, I better know it. I cannot accept confusion.

Ignorance is not a sin, because no one chooses to be ignorant. Everybody is born ignorant. Therefore, that is one thing you need not work for; you need not join a university to pick up ignorance! Ignorance is something I am born with. When I am born, I am ignorant of everything including my mothertongue. I am ignorant of my father, mother, everything. Therefore I start with ignorance and then keep on shedding the ignorance. Hence this ignorance is not something unusual. What is unusual is that I draw conclusions without proper enquiry. I should not conclude without a proper enquiry.

My physical body is as good an object of knowledge as any other physical body. In fact I know my body more intimately than you do. That is the reason why I am able to say I have a back pain and I apply for leave! I know my pain very well. I know where the pain is. I know my physical body more intimately than yours. "I" cannot be the object of my knowledge but the body definitely is. Therefore I am different from the body. I can be tall or short or fat or lean with reference to somebody. This physical body is as good



an object of knowledge as any other object.

You can say, "*Swāmījī*, I am the sense organs with the help of which I see this body, I touch this body." And so I must be the sense organs. This conclusion is again not true. I cannot be the eyes because I very well know that the eyes are blind, the eyes are sharp etc. Therefore since I know the eyes, I am the knower, I am the seer.

### Neither The Mind Nor The Intellect

And now I may conclude that I am the mind—mind or thoughts coming from the mind. All conclusions take place in the mind alone and then this also being the conclusion, naturally I should be the mind. And experientially, when the mind is restless, I am restless. When the mind is quiet I am quiet. When the mind is angry I am angry. When the mind is sorrowful I am sorrowful. Therefore mind and I are identical! But how do I say I am restless when mind is restless? How can I make this statement? Well, I do not know. It is my experience.

Experience is not final. It is not knowledge and that is why experientially I know and still I do not know. Experientially I know but knowledgewise I do not know. What is the experience? Here is an experience. One man came to me,

"*Swāmījī*, I am restless. I want peace."

"You are not restless. You are silence. You are peace." I told him.

"*Swāmījī*, I am restless". that man said. Although I see the fellow is restless I say, "You are all silence. You are fine."

"*Swāmī*, . . ." (Earlier he used *swāmījī*, but now he uses *Swāmī*). "*Swāmī*, I am restless. I am telling you I am restless." "No, you are all silence," I replied.

And the man told me, "I am not only restless but I think I

am losing my temper now. So I say again that I am restless, I am now angry. Please do not go on with this. You are a *Swāmī*. I do not want you to be the target of my anger. Please do not keep on repeating. I am restless and you do something about it."

"O.K. I will tell you. How do you say that you are angry?" I asked him.

"Because I know my mind."

"Do you know your mind?"

"Yes, I know my mind, it is restless."

"If your mind is restless, how come you say that 'you' are restless?"

"Why? Why should I not say?"

"Suppose you see a tree, and because the tree is restless, do you say 'I am restless'?"

"No, I do not say I am restless when the tree is restless."

"Then how can you say that you are restless?"

"Because I know the restless mind."

"You know the restless mind, just as you know a restless tree. Then you are no more the restless mind. How come you conclude 'I am restless'?"

"Well, I do not know."

"That is better. That is a better statement than the previous one. You cannot make a statement that you are restless when all the time you know the mind that is restless."

An unknown restless mind cannot make me restless. When it is unknown, I would not say "I am restless", because I do not know anything about the restlessness of the mind. If I know the mind that is restless, it is an object of knowledge and I cannot make the statement, "I am restless". I am the witness of the restless mind. When I say I am restless, I am committing the mistake of taking an object for the subject. When the eye is blind and I say I am blind, I take the object



viz. eye as the subject viz. I. When the body is tall and I say I am tall then again I am taking the object for the subject. This is what we call a mistake, an error; subject-object error, in which an object is taken for the subject.

Then if you say "I am memory", that also is not true. Because I am there to recollect the memory. Not that I have gone with the memory. I have collected them in the past and those are the memories I can recollect. That means I am the one who recollects. Before I recollected the memories, present I was to recollect the memories, to objectify those memories. I can just recollect exactly what I did at an earlier time; what I ate. I can make a list of all the items in lunch. Anyone can do it. Therefore I am the one who is aware of what had happened and naturally therefore memories cannot be I. So to say that I am memory is not true.

Again to say that I am a doctor of medicine, doctor of law, etc. is also not true, because I am aware of that. I am aware of the knowledge of law. I am aware of the knowledge of medicine. Therefore with reference to the knowledge of medicine I am a doctor of medicine or with reference to knowledge of law, I am a doctor of law. But I am not born a doctor, nor born a lawyer. I am the one who has gathered knowledge. In fact I know what all I know.

And you also cannot say, "*Swāmiji*, now I know." "What?" "I am ignorance." That is also a wrong conclusion. I cannot be ignorance, because I am knowledgeable. When I make a statement, "I am ignorant" it means that I have at least the knowledge that I am ignorant. And therefore I cannot say that I am ignorance. I am knowledgeable with reference to what I do not know. I know what I do not know. Therefore I am neither knowledgeable nor ignorant; with reference to knowledge, knowledgeable, with reference to ignorance, ignorant.

Therefore what am I? From one stand-point I am

knowledgeable, from another stand-point ignorant. Therefore I am the one who is neither ignorant nor knowledgeable and therefore who is that "I", because of which I am aware of everything? I am aware of ignorance, aware of knowledge, aware of memory, aware of emotions, aware of sense organs, aware of hunger and thirst, aware of this physical body. I am the subject, I am the awarer.

Everybody has to say "I am awarer." I am awarer, you are awarer, he is awarer, she is awarer. Even an ant has to say "I am awarer", if I ask an ant. An ant is aware of the ant-mind, ant-body, etc. A mosquito is aware of mosquito-mind, mosquito-body. And therefore every creature would say, "I am awarer." Every cub can say, "I am awarer," if I can make a cub speak.

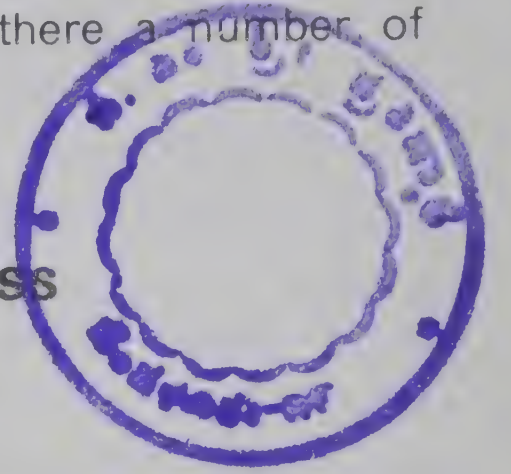
Now, if all of us are awarers, where should the differences exist? Differences should exist in memory. Differences should exist in knowledge. Knowledge itself is not different, but you may not know what I know, I may not know what you know. Therefore there is a difference between actions, difference between knowledge, difference between areas of ignorance, difference between areas of knowledge, difference in sense organs, difference in the body and so on. But in awarer, is there a difference? Is there a difference between I the awarer and he the awarer and any other awarer? No. There is no difference between the body-awarer and the wise man-awarer, the he-awarer and the she-awarer. Therefore the awarer does not differ. I am awarer, you are awarer, each one is awarer. If everyone is awarer, awarer, awarer, awarer . . . awarer . . . how many awarers are there?

That is a question. How many awarers are there? Like a child; each child is like another child. Is there any difference between two children? No difference. There is no "variety" in children but there is a *number*. In Sanskrit also we have *nānāvidham-nānā* is many in number and *vidham* is variety.



If all the chairs are identical in size, in colour, in the material from which they are made well you can say *many* but not *various*. Similarly I am awarer, you are awarer, he is awarer, she is awarer, every bug, everything is awarer. There is no variety in the awarers. One may say there is no variety, but there is a *number* of awarers. Are there a number of awarers?

### III. I, THE AWARENESS



#### The Awareness

As in Sanskrit, in English also we have the prefixes and suffixes. Using a suffix /y we make an adverb. Adding *er* we make a noun reveal a function. To *walk* we add *er*. It becomes 'walker'. *Er* in the word 'walker' reveals the person and 'walk', reveals the function on the part of the person. Therefore walker means the one who walks. Speaker means the one who speaks and similarly the thinker means the one who thinks; seer means the one who sees, hearer means the one who hears. Similarly, 'awarer' reveals an "I", an individual with reference to a function. What is the function? I am aware of something. Therefore I am called awarer.

You are aware of the object in my hand. So you are awarer. Now this object is removed. Then you become awarer of the *Swāmi*. I am a seer with reference to an object seen, hearer with reference to a sound heard. Similarly I am awarer with reference to the objects I am aware of; the objects that are seen, heard, known in general. Now let us assume that the *Swāmi*, the object is removed from awarer, what would be there? If the object is removed from awarer, what would remain? If the object is removed from the subject the awarer, the object is gone but the content of

*awarer* will remain. Object comes, object goes. When an object comes I become an awarer. When the object goes I am the content of the awarer. Let me call the content of the awarer as *awareness*.

The content of the awarer is awareness. Put it another way: In awareness are these words heard. You are awareness. When the word is heard awareness is, otherwise you cannot hear. When the word no more spoken is no more heard, is there awareness or not? Awareness is. Awareness is when words are heard, awareness is when words are not heard. Awareness is when forms are seen, awareness is when forms are not seen. Eyes are closed, awareness is. So also the awareness is when a thought is. Awareness is when a thought is gone. In awareness is the thought. Even when the thought goes awareness remains. An object of thought is, awareness is. The object of thought is gone, means a thought is gone—awareness is.

Put it differently: the space is in awareness. The space is, awareness is. Space is not—suppose you are not aware of space, as in sleep, where there is no space,—awareness is. I know that there is no time, no space, no memory in sleep. How do I know? I know that in sleep I did not know anything. Not that I knew everything either. In sleep I did not know anything and that means I was there aware of the sleeping state.

And therefore sleep is, awareness is. So time is, awareness is; time is not, awareness is. Space is, awareness is. Space is gone, awareness is. Now, does the awareness have a dimension? How many inches, or how big is the awareness? This awareness has no form. All forms are objects of awareness. Awareness itself has no form.

Since it has no form of its own, awareness is formless. It has no form to be called this big or that big. It has no height. It has no length. It has no breadth. It has no front. It has no



back. It has no left. It has no right. It has no above, It has no below. Why? Because there is no form. Awareness is formless. And therefore it is spatially limitless.

Now look at it this way. Space is, awareness is. Therefore the star is, awareness is. And therefore the limitless awareness is, space is. Space is, the limitless awareness is. Now between the limitless awareness and the space, what is the distance? Between space and the stars therein, what is the distance? No distance. Between space and the moon what is the distance? There is no distance.

Now tell me. The moon is in awareness because I am aware of the moon. Between awareness, you and the moon in awareness, what is the distance? There is no distance. Between I the awareness and the moon in awareness, if there is any distance what should it be? Space. And the space is where? In awareness. Between awareness and space there cannot be any distance. Therefore, in awareness is the space, in space is the moon, in space is the sun, in space are the stars, in space are all the planets. All of them, the whole physical universe is in space and the space is in awareness. Therefore between awareness and any object in the world what is the distance? There is no distance between awareness and this physical world.

### **The Limitless Brahman**

Now please understand. Isn't this physical body within the space? Is it outside the space or within the space? It is in the space. It is within the space. Now in the awareness is space, in space is this body, in space is that body. All the bodies exist in space and space itself is in awareness. And therefore, between awareness and this body or any body that exists—there is no distance. Therefore, where am I? There is no

location for I. Awareness is not located. The body is located in space and space itself is located in awareness. And awareness is located where? The question does not arise. Awareness is not located anywhere. In awareness is located space with reference to which we say, 'here', 'there', and so on. And therefore in awareness is space, in space is the body and everything else. So where is awareness? Where the *ākāśa* (space) is. Where *ākāśa* shines, there the awareness is i.e. awareness is not located in space. In awareness is space. Therefore awareness is called all-pervasive.

This is what we mean by the term *all-pervasiveness*. What we mean is that it is not located anywhere in space. Space is located in awareness. I am aware of space. Space is not aware of me. I am aware of time. Time is not aware of me. I am aware of the concept of time, the concept of space but the concept itself is not aware of me. Please understand that. Therefore I am the awareness in which all concepts exist and all the objects of concepts exist. So naturally I am limitless awareness.

Therefore how many 'I's are there? There is only one limitless awareness, and I am that limitless awareness. In English also there is no plural for awareness. How many 'awarenesses' are there? There is only one awareness. Because two limitless cannot be there. In limitless awareness is the mind; this mind, that mind, this memory, that memory, space, time, the whole creation—think of anything and it is in awareness. Certain things look outside our awareness. They are not outside awareness. They are outside the mind. Certain objects are outside the reach of my mind, outside my thought. That is good because otherwise the whole creation would be in my mind! Awareness is common, no doubt. In awareness is space and time. In space is an object. That object is outside my mind and therefore it looks to be outside me. It is not outside me, it is not outside awareness.



Just as we say we are all inside the compound. With reference to that compound-wall we are all inside and there are people outside too. But then from the stand-point of the space, who is outside and who is inside? From the stand-point of space there is nobody outside nor inside. All are inside. So also from the stand-point of awareness. There is only one limitless awareness. There is no second limitless awareness.

Therefore awareness is rightly called *brahman*. Ayam ātmā Brahma. *Ātmā*, the Self is but *Brahman*. *Brahman* means limitless, the word *Brahman* being derived from the root *brh*, which is in the sense of growth or increase. So *Brahman* means the big. Big is an adjective which qualifies a noun. A big mountain, a big elephant, a big rat, a big mosquito etc. Therefore when I use the word big it reveals a dimension. The dimension of the word 'big' is determined by the very noun it qualifies. Big mountain means the bigness of a mountain. When I say 'big among the rats', the bigness has become *rat bigness*, not *mountain bigness*. From this it is clear that being an adjective, the word *big* assumes the dimension of the very noun it qualifies.

Now suppose we form a masculine or a neuter noun out of the root *brh*. That noun is *Brahman*. *Brahman* means big. It is a noun. A noun is an object, not an adjective. Therefore how big is the noun *Brahman*? It has no definite dimension. It is limitlessly big. Therefore *ātmā* the awareness is limitless, the big—*Brahman*. Limitless big means *Brahman*. That is why Ayam *Ātmā* Brahma. This Self, this 'I' is *Brahman* and everybody's *ātmā* is also *Brahman*. You cannot become bigger than what you are. You are limitless.

## I, The Unqualified Awareness

The meaning of the word I, as unfolded by the *śruti*, the *upanisads* is simple, unqualified awareness. If I reduce the whole creation to the two factors, the subject and the object, then the subject is revealed by the word 'I' and the object can be referred to by the pronoun *this*. In Sanskrit the equivalent words are *aham* and *idam*. *Aham* is "I" and *idam* is *this*. There is no confusion between *Aham* and *idam*, so long as the word *idam*, the pronoun *this* refers to an object external to the physical body. So this object, this pole, this light, this music, this chair, this tree, this man, this woman, this sun, this moon, this star . . . etc.— I never take anyone of these as myself. But when it comes to my physical body I take this body as myself even though it is subject to objectification. This body is an object of my awareness. I am aware of my physical body. It is all right to say I am tall or short, fat or lean with reference to the body, there is nothing wrong in it. Like even when having reached the destination by a car, I tell my friend 'From Baroda to Ahmedabad, I did in two hours.' It is not possible for anybody to cover the distance in two hours. Centred on myself there was no action. I was relaxed in the back seat of the car. So I myself did not perform any action, but then I did it in two hours with reference to the car in which I was travelling.

Similarly, if I say, 'I am tall' or 'I am short' there is nothing wrong. But if I take the physical body itself as myself without an enquiry, without knowledge, then there is a confusion between the self and the body, between I (*aham*) and this (*idam*). So too the restless mind is subject to objectification. The mind which is an object of my awareness cannot be the one who is aware of it. So too, memories, knowledge, ignorance, all of them are objects of my awareness. There-



fore the word 'I' refers only to the subject which is but awareness.

This awareness itself does not have a form. All forms are objects of awareness. If awareness also had a form, how would I come to know of it? Suppose I say, 'Yesterday I saw, in my meditation, the awareness, the 'I', in the form of a *flame*,—people say that—how is it possible? Because the one who saw the awareness is the one that is the 'I' we are talking about. I am not talking about the lights that you see, which are outside. People see lights inside. This is the beginning of all the troubles to come later. We are talking about the one who is aware of this light. That light is not something that comes and goes. That shines and everything else shines after it.

My eyes and the mind are bright, capable of sight and knowledge respectively. 'I' the awareness blesses the mind and so the mind is conscious. In the light of the sun, during the day, I see various objects and all the objects themselves being opaque, I would say, shine, after the sun. They have no original light. They shine for my perception because of the sunlight, reflecting the sunlight. I can put it this way: the sun shines (*bhāti*) and other planets and satellites within the system 'shines after' (*anubhāti*) the sun. The sun itself shines because my eyes shine. the bright sun is no more the bright sun for the one who is blind—there may be the hot sun for him but not the bright one. So the bright sun shines because my eyes shine. And my eyes shine because my mind is behind the eyes. That is the reason why, when the mind is elsewhere, eyes fail to see eventhough the object is there. I draw blank. This can be seen very clearly with reference to hearing. Ears shine meaning, they illumine the sound. The ears hear these words only when the mind is behind the ears. Eventhough the ears are here within the scope of audibility, you may not hear these words if the mind is else-

where. In the audience I see this now and then. When most people laugh about some remark I might have made, I notice someone—there is always one fellow—nudging his neighbour and asking, “What did the *Swāmī* say?” Not that he has suddenly gone deaf. He had heard my earlier words. He will hear me again later. In between there was a black-out. Why? Because the mind was not behind the ears. There are some, I am sure, who have not heard even this sentence! Thus when the mind is shining behind the eyes, ears etc., they light up the respective objects of perception viz. forms, colours, sounds, etc.

“He, whose intelligence ‘*flashes*’ outside through the eyes and other sense organs, just like the bright light of a great lamp placed in a jar having many holes, and after whose shining this whole universe of *objects* shines . . . . to Him, the Divine Teacher, *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is this prostration.”

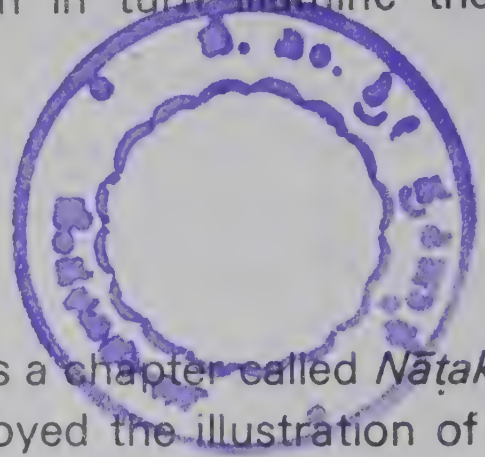
(*Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram-4*)

What a beautiful illustration! Here is a jar with holes, five of them, let us say. The jar itself is in a room which is dark and inside the stomach of the jar is kept a bright lamp. Five beams of light source emerge out of the five holes. Each beam of light illumines some objects, the objects that lie on its path. But the light inside is one, not many. Similarly my sense organs, five in number, light up their respective objects. Eyes light up the forms and colours, ears the sounds, nose the smells, tongue the tastes and the sense of touch the various forms of touch. Each of them can be likened to a beam of light as it lights up the objects. Behind these sense

- \* नानाच्छिद्र घटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभा भास्वर  
ज्ञान यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरण द्वारा बहिः स्पन्दते ।  
जानामीति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत्  
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥  
(श्रीदक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्-४)



organs, there is one light called the mind. They all shine after the mind. The mind itself with its moving pattern of thoughts lights up the sense organs which in turn illumine their respective objects.



### The Dancer and The Lamp

In a text called *Pañcadaśī* there is a chapter called *Nāṭaka Dīpa Prakaraṇam* wherein is employed the illustration of a theatre lamp. The mind is compared to a dancer and this dancer dances on a circular auditorium wherein there is only one bright lamp above. The lamp lights up the audience in front, the sense objects. It also lights up the dancer, the mind; the mind is compared to a dancer since it moves. This dancer keeps on varying according to the mood. Just as there are many different *rasas*, moods, sentiments, there are modes of the mind called *vṛttis*. When an object is perceived, there is a mode in terms of the response to what is perceived. Thus the mind dances. The dancer herself is dancing—these *vṛttis* dance and there is a light that lights up that mind which illumines the objects.

What is that light, one single light alone, which illumines the dancing mind and which shines even if the mind does not dance? That single light lights up anything that obtains in the mind. The dancer goes and comes back the other way and again dances. The light above illumines her as soon as she comes. The lamp lights up an empty auditorium. It also lights up a filled up auditorium. And there is a master for whose sake the dance itself is arranged. He is sitting on the very stage in one corner and observes the audience (sense objects, the world) the musicians (the sense organs) and the dancer (the mind). The sense objects and the sense organs are like the rhythms and instruments which set exactly what the *vṛtti* is going to be. Whenever an object is perceived by a

given sense organ, there is a corresponding *vṛtti*, just as the compliments set the dancer's rhythm, the steps, the moods, etc. . . . And the whole show is for the one sitting there, the master. This is all for his entertainment. Many-a-time he identifies with the dancer. He becomes very sad when the dancer expresses a mood of sorrow. And that master is also illumined by lamp above.

That lamp shines (*bhāti*). That lamp is *aham*. We can go back to the previous illustration of the lamp in a jar. " . . . whose intelligence 'flashes' outside through the eyes and other sense organs, just like the bright light of a great lamp placed in a jar having many holes . . . like even the beams of light which go out to light up the objects." There is a light behind the light that is the mind and the sense organs. *Jñāna* is there so the mind shines, sense organs shine. When the mind is not active the sense organs are resolved, withdrawn like the sense organs of a tortoise. Still 'I', the awareness lights up the mind as in dream where the sense organs are no more exposed to the external world but then there is a world created in the mind which the "I" lights up. When that is also gone, the whole theatre is empty, as it happens in sleep. Still the light lights up for you to say in the morning, "I slept well. I had a good sleep. I did not see anything, did not hear anything, did not know anything." This recollection of the experience of the deep-sleep indicates that there also the "I" is shining. Does it ever cease to shine? Is there a light that even illumines the "I"? No. Everything else shines after That. It itself shines of its own accord. It does not come., It does not go. The thought comes and thought goes. But the "I" remains shining. Space, I am aware of. Time, I am aware of. Time gone, space gone—for a split second—I become a flame of joy. I still find that I am shining. Thus that which survives time, that which survives space, that which survives any object shines



(*bhāti*). Everything else shines after (*anubhāti*) it.

“There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars; there lightnings also do not shine—what then to talk of this earthly fire? Verily, everything shines after Him who shines. This whole world is illumined with His light.”\*

(Kāthopaniṣad 2-2-15)

This beautiful verse occurs in two places, in two different *upaniṣads*—*Kāthopaniṣad* and *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*. This verse is traditionally chanted in temples by the priests while showing the light before the Lord. (*Tatra Sūryah na bhāti;*) there the sun does not shine, means the sun does not illumine It. (*na candratārakam;*) neither the moon, nor the stars. (*na imāḥ vidyutaḥ bhānti;*) Even these lightnings do not light up whom (*kutaḥ ayaṃ agniḥ;*) then what to talk of this earthly fire? Verily, everything shines after Him who shines, This whole world is illuminated with His light. He is self-effulgent and to illumine Him I am holding this *agni*, this lamp, this flame O Lord, what a fool I am!

## The light of knowledge

In south India there are many temples. Sometimes we wonder as we go inside a temple. The temple itself is a miniature creation. There are open corridors. As we enter these corridors, we find there the sculptures depicting different aspects of life. There are musical instruments, there are dancing poses, there are people—men, women, we can

\* न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं  
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं  
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥  
(क. उ. २-२-१५)

see the entire world in sculpture. Further entering the *mahāmaṇḍapaṃ* we find again various angels, gods etc. Still we proceed further and the *maṇḍapaṃ* becomes darker and darker. And finally we stand before the main shrine. In the shrine is a deity; there is an idol. People worship that idol. In fact nobody worships an idol. One worships the Lord. We know that the idol is only made up of stone. In spite of our knowledge that this is merely a stone, we worship it and that means we are not worshipping the stone but the Lord behind the stone. Now we stand there before the idol. The stone from which the idol is made is black. The place is dark. The man who performs *pūjā*, the worship, is also not particularly fair! He is also dark and his clothes are also black. And the idol has received a number of oil baths therefore it has become very dark. And we stand there having been exposed to the bright light of the external world. Our eyes are not attuned to see the Lord who is there. But we know He is there. How do we know He is there? An oil lamp is burning and in that light we see the dazzling jewellery, the precious stones, the ornaments with which the Lord is decorated. We see only the dazzle of these ornaments called the *vibhūtis*, the glories.

Similar is the case in our life. I do not know where the Lord is. I do not know who the Lord is. Whether it is a He or She, even that is a question! But then I see the *vibhūtis*, the glories. I see the sun, I see the moon, I see the order in the creation. These are all His glories. They are the glitters seen in the small little flame of the oil lamp, in the light of my *buddhi*, my intellect. And with this I know and I become an *āstika*, a believer, *there is a Lord*.

I stand there in the temple in great veneration and hope that I will see the Lord. I will have the *darśana*, the vision of the Lord. Now there is a priest, (who is in place of the *guru*)



who stands there. He holds a light of camphor, (which stands for the light of Knowledge). Camphor is a peculiar substance which completely burns itself and does not leave any trace behind just as in the light of knowledge, all ignorance is burnt. So in that light I see Lord, whom I knew to be there. From the *āstika*, a believer, I now become a *jñānī*, the one who knows. I have *darśana*, the vision of the Lord in the light of knowledge shown by the *guru*. As the priest shows the light, I see Him from the feet to the head. The *guru* reveals to me the nature of the Lord and I see in that light that nothing is left out. The ignorance is totally burnt. All my notions, all my errors completely, totally get burnt in the light of knowledge, the *jñānāgni*. And in that flame I see my Lord and I say "Oh *bhagavan*! How did I ever miss you? Once I know, how could I ever miss you? That is my *aparādha*, my fault. Oh Lord! Please pardon me. What a fool I have been to have missed you!" And thus at this time the priest chants this well-known mantra *na tatra sūryo bhāti* . . . . .! Oh! I hold a small light, a camphor light before you, oh Lord, to light up the one who lights up everything; because of whom everything shines. What light can I hold before you except the light of Knowledge? And that Knowledge is: The Lord, the Self, "I" shine and everything else shines after me.

### **The Self-effulgent I**

That self-shining, self-effulgent 'I', is independent. It does not require a means of knowledge to reveal Itself. If I ask you, "Are you conscious?" what do you have to do to answer? Should you see something in order to say, "I am conscious"? Should you close your eyes and then say, "I am conscious"? Or as usual would you say, "I will consult her

and and tell you"? When I ask whether or not you are conscious, there is no doubt in your mind that you are conscious. The very question is heard by you because you are conscious. It is not that I think and therefore I am. I am and therefore I think. Before a thought arises I exist. After the thought has gone, I remain. There is a self-effulgent being which remains when thought comes and thought goes. I exist as a self-effulgent being and therefore everything else shines after me.

The existence of everything else has got to be proven by the *pramāṇas*, the valid means of knowledge which are at my disposal. Thus the existence of colour is proven by eyes, that of smell by nose, etc. and it is upto me to operate these *pramāṇas* or instruments to perceive the respective objects. But there is one thing that need not be proven by anybody and that is that I exist, that I am conscious, that I am effulgent. All the *pramāṇas*, means of knowledge, viz. sense organs and the mind shine after That which Itself does not require any proof of Its existence or effulgence. This self-effulgent being is *aham*, I, which itself has no form and therefore it is limitless. If it is limitless, it cannot but be called *Brahman*. It is *Brahman* because *Brahman* means limitless. Therefore they say *ayam atma brahma*. *ayam atma* means *this* Self, for which no proof is necessary. It is *aparoksa atma* or immediate Self—the *atma* or "I" which does not require any means of knowledge to determine whether it exists or not.

The self-effulgent I, the self-evident I, is limitless *Brahman*. It survives the time. Time shines only after this I, the awareness. Time comes and goes. The concept of time goes on changing. My mind can get into different scales of time and that is why sometimes the time hangs on and sometimes flies away. You know the relative nature of time very well. When you stand talking to your beloved at the bus-stop, buses go like this, one after the other. You do not



bother at all. But then when you wait alone for the bus, you find buses never seem to come.

A great scientist said that, if you want to know the relative nature of time, do one thing. Stand on a hot plate for one minute. Just for one minute, that is enough. On a hot plate, remember, a plate on which when you throw water it immediately evaporates. On that hot plate stand for a minute with a stop watch in hand. You will understand why it is called a stop watch. It does not move at all! Because down below is a hot plate. So remember, this is what is meant by *relative* nature of time. When the same man is talking to his beloved, the time acquires wings as it were. This is the relative nature of time. The mind gets into different time-scales and then it has got its own time—chronological or subjective time. The chronological time is that which is involved in motion etc. and the subjective time is that which is created subjectively by our own mind. Whatever be the time, it shines after what? After “I” the awareness, the limitless.

Nothing can be away from the limitless and therefore the awareness itself, the “I” is not bound by time. It is not mortal. It has neither a beginning, nor an end. Before the beginning of everything there must be an awarer. To say that an event began, there must be an awarer, an observer who should be there before even the event began. That an event began and ended means that its prior non-existence should be known to the observer and so also the posterior non-existence. The observer is always there before the beginning of the event and also after the event has ended. Therefore if awareness itself is considered to have a beginning and an end then there should be another awareness to observe the beginning and end of this awareness. We are talking of that ultimate awareness, anyway, which is not subject to time, not subject to beginning or end. That which is beginningless—not subject to beginning and which

is endless—not subject to end i.e. which exists at all the time is called *sat* in Vedanta; and the awareness, is called the *cit*. Thus the awareness, *cit* is beginningless and endless and so It is *sat* also. *cit* is *sat* and *sat* is *cit*.

## IV. THE TRUTH

### Can Truth Be Defined?

Once while giving a talk in a university in Western United States, I said that Vedanta is a teaching that is a means of knowledge which unfolds the nature of yourself, the world and the Lord. At the end of the talk, a professor of physics came to me and asked,

"*Swāmī*, did you say that your teaching Vedanta is going to reveal Truth?"

"Yes, it reveals Truth." I said.

"The teaching is in form of words, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to say then that the words reveal Truth?"

"Yes, words reveal Truth."

"Do you mean to say that you are going to define Truth?"

"I want to define Truth."

"But then *Swāmī*, is it not that any definition of anything can only be from a stand-point and is subject to negation (from another stand-point)?"

That is true. I also know that. Not only do I know, our forefathers also knew that and therefore I said, "Yes, that is true."

Any definition represents only a point of view. You can define this cloth in different ways. You can define this material as a cloth, as a scarf, as threads, as cotton-fibers. That also can be reduced to more fundamental substances. You can go on defining. All the definitions are relevant from



their stand-points and therefore no particular definition is final because it is always from a stand-point. Therefore every definition is subject to negation from some other stand-point. You can go on reducing a thing to another thing, to more and more basic thing. Then definition also keeps on changing. And therefore no definition is possible about Truth. Once you define Truth, it is subject to negation from another stand-point. Thus Truth is not available for definition.

"Any definition is subject to negation. Therefore if you say you are defining Truth it is also subject to negation" he said.

"That is true."

"Then how are you going to reveal Truth? How are you going to define Truth?"

"Well, I am going to define Truth right now."

He was surprised to hear my statement and said, "O.K. Go ahead." Then I said to him,

*"What is not subject to negation is Truth."*

He was shocked! He said,

"How come it didn't strike me!"

"Neither did it strike me. Somebody had to tell me. My *guru* taught me." I told him.

"What is not subject to negation, in all the three periods of time is Truth. There is nothing new about it. What is not subject to negation in the three periods of time is called *satya*. Because everything else is subject to negation and does not qualify to be called *satya*. What is not subject to negation in all the three periods of time is *satya*." He said, "O.K. *Swāmī*, tomorrow I will talk to you again. I will think over this further." He went away.

He came back next day, an hour before the talk. He came to the place where I was and said to me,

"*Swāmī*, I tried to shake your statement but it is impossible. And therefore *Swāmījī*, tell me one thing. Is there such a thing as Truth?" he asked me.

He was a scientist, so he could not remain with a doubt. A scientist with a doubt in head means he is finished. It is something like a bug in the ear, an active bug! So he could not sleep the whole night. He tried to shake this definition but could not. Therefore he came and asked me,

"Please tell me *Swāmījī*, is there such a thing as Truth?"

"Yes, there is and I will tell you what it is. You please attend today's talk."

"*Swāmījī*, I will attend not only today's talk but all your talks. But this you must tell me right now. I cannot wait for another one hour."

"There is" I said to him, "only one thing, my dear sir, that you cannot negate."

"Please tell me sir, what is it?"

"That is you."

"Me?!"

"Yes, You try to negate yourself."

"Why not? I will negate myself."

"Try. Another trial now. Yesterday you tried to shake the definition. Now you try to negate yourself. You can negate time, you can negate space. But when you try to negate yourself, in the attempt of negating yourself, you will wind up sitting there tightly. You cannot negate yourself. How will you negate yourself?"

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### **Sat, Cit and Ānanda**

I cannot negate the subject itself. An object is subject to negation. The Subject is not subject to negation because who is going to negate the subject? The subject cannot negate himself. In the name of negation, the subject will be sitting there tight and therefore he cannot be negated. Thus the subject is something which is not bound by time, which is not bound by space. It is the one in which the space is, in

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which the time is. And the whole creation is indeed in the space-time frame-work and so the whole creation is in "I", that which is called *Brahman*, the substratum of the creation and naturally therefore it is *sat*. Things come and things go but this one is present at all the times. And this is exactly the *is* in everything that *is* in every form of existence.

When we say the sky is, the cloud is, the space is, the time is, the earth is, the sun is, the moon is, the star is, the heaven is, the hell is, you is, she is, he is, it is, I is, all are is. I am also is only and therefore I is, you is, he is, she is, it is; that *is* is common. *Is* is the common plane. When we say something is, there is a knowledge also involved in it. There is the awareness of the existence of that thing. The existence of anything—sky, clouds, time, space, etc. can be established only when I am aware of them. The awareness *cit* and the existence *sat* is the common plane in which the whole creation is. The *sat* and *cit* is at once limitless and formless and therefore it is fullness itself. That is the reason why whenever one is happy, one is with oneself. Whenever I am with myself, I am happy. In spite of the limitations of the body, mind, etc., I am happy. When I am happy, I am full. When I am full, I am happy.

If that happiness depends upon the negation of all the limitations or if it depends upon the filling up of all the limitations—physical, perceptual, intellectual limitations—I can never become full. Because how am I going to fill up my physical limitations? If I am here, I am not there. I can expand a little more but I cannot cover the entire space! I can gather a little more strength but I cannot lift a mountain. My intellectual knowledge is also limited. The more I know, the more I come to discover what all I do not know; it is only the one who knows a lot, knows what he does not know. The one who does not know anything thinks he knows a lot. Thus by knowing more, I come to know that I have yet to cover

better areas of observation; I have yet to rise to a better elevation of observation; I come to know many areas which I still do not know. Many new areas of ignorance open up! Thus endless research goes on and on. Therefore intellectually also I am limited and if I have to wait for the moment of fullness until all these limitations are filled up, my God, I can never get that fullness.

But this fullness is not denied to anybody, however tragic—according to him—his life may be. Nobody is denied these moments of fullness. Because everyone does discover a moment of joy now and then and that time he is full, all full. From where do I pick up these moments of fullness in spite of the limitations which I have not yet filled up? I do discover for myself a fullness which is called joy, *ānanda*. From where do I pick up this?

### **Where is Happiness?**

Well, it certainly is not from outside. Because no object in the world can be called *happiness*. There is sun, there is moon—all definable from a stand-point but none of them is called *happiness*. Is there any object called happiness? If there is one, we will all go and get a bit of it. There is no such object and no object can be considered as a source of happiness also, because the same object is a source of unhappiness for somebody else. The very same object which I take to be a source of happiness to me many a time becomes a source of unhappiness to me also.

I know a man who was waiting to marry a particular girl. She was already married. Her husband was trying to get rid of her and this man was eager to get hold of her! And having done it now both are happy! One heaves a sigh of relief and the other feels elated because he has got what he wanted. Both feel that God is great. What does this mean? It means



that the poor thing, that girl, does not have anything to do with the joy of one or the sorrow of the other. One fellow looks upon her as a source of joy, another looks upon her as a source of sorrow. And therefore the person herself (or himself) or any other object for that matter cannot be considered a source of joy or a source of sorrow. A person or a thing is only an object. So there is no such object as happiness.

Nor is happiness an attribute to an object which we can perceive by our sense organs. Like the green leaf, like a big pot, there is no such thing called a happy leaf or a happy pot, etc. Is it there as an attribute to an object? If it is, that object should give me happiness at all times and places. But such is not the case! Therefore happiness is not an object outside in the world.

Happiness is not there at a particular place also. Is there happiness on the beach? We cannot say that. Because beach is nothing but sand and cigarette butts. There is nothing more than that! You may say, "The beach makes me happy." But the beach can make you unhappy too. Because on this beach alone we see this man sobbing. He has lost his wife. He often used to go to this beach with his wife and therefore whenever he thinks of a beach, he thinks of the tragedy and gets into dejection. So not only is this particular beach a problem to him, he cannot go to any beach. Any sand, even *Sābarmatī*, is a problem for him. And therefore we cannot say that any given place is a source of happiness. It is not the place. If it is a place where happiness is, all of us can make a bee-line to that place. So it is not a place that is a source of happiness.

Nor can we say that a particular time is a source of happiness. No one can say, "*Swāmījī* every day at five o'clock I laugh. I am happy at that time and afterwards again I am sorrowful." Such a thing is not there and so time cannot

be said to be the source of happiness. Like the place, time can be a source of sorrow too.

Neither time, nor place, nor an object is the source of happiness, and the whole external world consists of time, place and objects. Then from where do you pick up the happiness? Someone says, "from within." What do you mean by within? In your intestines? In your kidney? Kidney is not a source of happiness. It is a source for developing stones! (I have got my own definitions). Is happiness in your heart? Heart is subject to get an attack. Lungs are subject to get congested. What exactly do you mean is the source of happiness? "Within" means what? "Swāmījī, do not take it literally. When I say *within* I mean the 'mind'." "Oh, O! So the mind is the source of happiness! Then what is the source of sorrow?" "Swāmījī, that is also my mind only." "Then how can it be both? Can it be a source of sorrow as well as of joy? How can it be both? If you say the mind, when there is sadness there is mind, when there is jealousy there is mind, when there is hatred there is mind, when there is frustration there is mind, when there is restlessness there is mind and when there is joy, also of course there is the mind. Therefore from where do you pick up joy?" "Swāmījī, by 'mind' I mean a particular frame of mind."

Look, here is a garland in my hand. Before I picked up this garland, what was in my hand? Nothing. Then you did not see the garland. Now when you see the garland, what is in your mind? Elephant or garland? Garland. For any perception there is a relevant mode of thought which is called *vṛtti* in Sanskrit. A *vṛtti* is as good as the object perceived. Therefore when a garland is seen what form of thought should be there? Garland-thought. And when only my simple hand is seen, what is the thought? Hand-thought. When this glass-case is seen, what is the thought? Glass-case thought. Therefore the form of our thought is always true to



the object perceived. So corresponding to a garland outside, there is a garland-thought in my mind. And I see the garland-thought and say, "This is a garland." At that time do we say, "I am the garland"? No, because if I am a garland, I am fit to be worn by people! So I see the garland and say "This is a garland." But I am not the garland.

### **Happiness, My Very Nature**

Now when you are happy, what is there in the mind? Happiness. Is it not? And do we say "This is Happiness"? In case of a garland we say, "This is a garland." But when there is the thought of happiness in the mind, do we say, "There is happiness"? or do we say, "I am happy"? Yes, we say, "I am happy." That is entirely a different thing. Since I do not say, "This is happiness", is happiness an object, "this" or is it the subject "I"? It is the subject "I" really. That is the truth of it. That is why we do not say, "This is happiness." If happiness is an object, you know what it means? The observer of happiness must be different from happiness! It is always away from me. Formerly it was "there" and now it is "here". But still I am not happiness; I would always remain unhappy. But that is not so. So happiness cannot be an object, cannot be away from me. Happiness is my very nature.

Happiness means fullness. That fullness is experientially manifest when the mind stops projecting, when the mind is resolved. That is why sometimes the sky makes me happy, because at that time, the mind is non-projecting. I accept the sky as it is. The mind is non-projecting when it is simple, when it is not willing, not assuming, not desiring for a change of the set-up outside or of anything inside. Thus a simple, abiding mind picks up joy. This is what generally happens when we experience something desirable. The mind

does assume that state and we pick up happiness for it is our nature. Our nature is fullness, *ānanda*.

Some one may say, "*Swāmījī*, I cannot accept this argument because whenever I am unhappy, then also I say, "I am unhappy." The mind is unhappy, so I am unhappy. Then which is the truth? Whether "I am happy" is truth or "I am unhappy" is truth?

That can be settled very easily. Listen to this dialogue. A man once went to an eye-specialist and complained to him,

"Doctor, please help me. I have a problem that my eyes see."

"What? What do your eyes see? Do they see two things where there is one? Or two as one?" the doctor asks.

"No doctor, my eyes see one as one, two as two."

"Then what is the problem? Do you not see the things that are near? Or are you not able to read from a distance?"

"No. I can read all those letters there and also see the things that are near. I can read a book also."

"Is it that you do not see the colours?"

"No. I know you are wearing a blue shirt. I see colours all right."

"Then perhaps it is your problem that in the evening you do not see!"

"No, no. I can see in the evening too. In fact I have eyes like an owl."

"Then what is the problem?"

"I told you in the beginning that my eyes see."

Then the doctor said,

"Oh! I see, you have come to a wrong doctor. In the next block there is a psychiatrist. Please try him."

I doubt, if such a conversation would ever take place.

So what is natural is not a matter for complaint. That my eyes see, ears hear is not a matter for complaint. Nobody complains to a doctor because he gets hungry at regular



intervals, because it is natural. If what went inside the body still remains there, producing a lot of gas etc. then one has a complaint to make. That my mind thinks is not a matter for complaint since it is natural. Now-a-days people complain about this too. Thank God the mind thinks. It is meant for thinking. Let it think. And therefore what is natural is not a matter for complaint; but then I complain about sadness. I do not want to remain sad. Even my system does not accept alien bugs. If they enter the body the system throws them out. Anything foreign is thrown out. That is the system. Similarly when I have sorrow, do I welcome it? No. I want to get rid of sorrow as soon as I can. And if I am happy I am not in a hurry to get rid of it. I am not tired of being happy. I am tired of being sorrowful. I avoid sorrow and frustration. Even in our common dealings, we do not congratulate a person who is sad. Nor do we sympathise with and console a person who is happy. We do not say, "This should not happen to you sir. Why at all, of all the people, should you be happy? You are such a charitable man. You are the benefactor of so many people. Why then should this happiness visit you of all people? I am really sorry." This would be ridiculous. So it is clear. The common-sense experience is good enough to know that I do not complain of being happy.

### **The Real and the Unreal**

I complain of being sad. Therefore happiness is my nature. *Aham saccidānanda*: I am *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. If I am *saccidānanda*, what is this world? The world shines after me. The world is, I am. The world is not, I am. Look, suppose there is a golden chain in your hand. Now for the time being, let us suppose that I do not know what a chain is, that I only know what gold is. Then if I ask you, "What is hanging in

your hand?" You say, "a chain". But I do not know what a chain is. I have never heard the word "chain". I know what gold is. So I am surprised at your answer, "Is this a chain? Where is it? I see gold in your hand and not a chain." You insist it to be a chain. Then how can it be two things simultaneously? How can two words be used for the same thing unless both the words are synonyms? If the chain and the gold are synonyms like *jala* and *udaka* that is fine. But here if you say gold and chain are the two words used for the same object then they should be synonyms. If they are synonyms, chain should be gold. Wherever there is chain, there should be gold. But this is not the case; otherwise copper chain can be exchanged for gold. And therefore gold and chain are two different things.

Chain, the word, the name (*nāma*) has got its corresponding object. Gold, the word (*nāma*) has its object. I have an object for my word gold. I find it is all gold—I touch gold, I pull gold and therefore it is gold. You say it is a chain.

Then what is it? Chain is gold. Is it or not? Yes, chain is gold. Suppose the chain is gone, where is gold? The chain is broken, resolved, melted and still the gold is. Please understand well. When the chain is, the gold is. When the chain is gone, the gold is. Therefore which is *satya*? Gold is *satya*. And chain is just the form and name. Chain is a word, a name for which there is a form. Before the creation of the chain the word chain with its knowledge was there in mind of the goldsmith and he gave a form to the gold. Therefore creation is nothing but a form with a name chain. The chain is not independent of gold.

Now think. There is one tonne of gold. Out of this one tonne of gold I make thousands of chains, thousands of bangles, thousands of rings and place them all in a pile: let us say one tonne pile. Before the ornaments were created there was one tonne gold. After the chains and bangles and rings



are created, there is still one tonne gold. Let us say there are some 50,000 pieces. Now let us count them. I count first, *lābham*. *Lābham* means one. Number one is called *lābham*. So I counted gold and took the whole thing and then what is left for you? Nothing. You do not have anything. Suppose I do not count gold, what have you got? 50,000 ornaments. This is called *dvaita*, duality...one...two...three...50,000. But I count gold. Then there is only one. Even when I count 50,000 one thing does not change there; that is gold. Gold...gold...gold...gold... The gold-thought does not change. The chain is definitely different from the ring because what the chain can do, ring cannot do. We cannot put the ring on the neck however slim we may be! The chain has a reality about it. The ring has a reality about it. The bangle has a reality about it. It is not that they are not real. But then do they really exist without gold? That is the point. They do not have an independent existence. But therefore they cannot be dismissed as non-existent.

Chain cannot be dismissed as a man's horns can be. How many have I got? How sharp are they? That cannot be answered because a man's horns are non-existent. But can you say the chain is non-existent? Chain has an existence, though a dependent existence and therefore you cannot dismiss it as non-existent. You cannot accept it as existent either, because it does not have an independent existence. And therefore what is it? It is called *mithya* or unreal.

So gold is *satya* or Real and the chain is *mithyā* or unreal. Bangle is also *mithya*. And ring is what? Also *mithya*. *Satya* plus *mithyā* is equal to what? One gold plus many forms (ornaments) is equal to what? It is equal to one.

This is called *advaita*. It is what our *upaniṣads* say: *ekamevādvitīyam Brahma*: *Brahman* is one without a second. A modification (like a pot of clay) exists only in name depending upon the speech. Clay alone is true. It is the

a or the Truth. Because that is the nature of creation. We examine any creation, it is found to be like that (You say pot, I say there is only clay. You say chair, I say there is only the wood, the substance of which the chair is made. You say, car, I say there is no car at all. What is there is steel, rubber, air, gas, water, plastic and what not? None of them is a car. But then it is a name given to an assembly of a lot of things performing a certain function. Well, we call it a car. This is what we call *mithyā*. We often misunderstand what *Mithyā* is. *Mithyā* does not mean non-existent. *Mithyā* means what is usefully existent, but not independently existent.

Now look. When the space is, awareness is; time is, awareness is; earth is, awareness is; he is, awareness is; she is, awareness is. Now when the time is gone, awareness is. Therefore which is *satya*? Awareness is *satya*. Awareness is called *Brahman*. *Brahman satyam*: *Brahman* is Real, *jagat mithyā*: creation is *mithyā*. Therefore *satya* which is one, plus *mithyā*, which is manifold, is equal to what? It is only one.

This is what is called the non-dual, *advaita* — not Śaṅkara's *advaita* as people say. Śaṅkara was only an *ācārya*. He was the one who presented this Truth to the people, in a way that can be understood. He captured the tradition of teaching in those beautiful sentences of his exquisite prose and kept alive the tradition for the future generations to come. He himself acquired this knowledge from his *guru* or teacher. His *guru* taught him and therefore the knowledge has been coming down traditionally:

"Our salutations to the line of great teachers which very well began with Lord Sadāśiva, which has Śaṅkarācārya as the middle link and which extends right upto our own teachers."\* And thus we do not know from where this

\* सदाशिवसमारम्भां शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमाम् ।  
अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम् ॥



knowledge comes down. I cannot find the source. I know my *guru* had this knowledge. That is why I got it from him. He got it from his teacher, and he got it from his teacher . . . and so on. Every teacher is a disciple of his own teacher. Someone asked me, "Who is the first teacher?" I asked him, "Who is the first father?" First father was a son of his father who himself had a father. And again that father also had a father. So first father is Lord, the creator. So also the first teacher must be the Lord himself.

## V. CREATION AND CREATOR

### Lord, The Creator

The creation of a chain involves two causes: One the material cause, the gold and the other the efficient cause, the goldsmith, who made it. Any creation involves a material cause as well as an efficient cause. The efficient cause should have the knowledge of what he creates and the purpose for which it is created. The one who creates a pot must have the knowledge of the pot. And he also knows for what purpose he creates it. Otherwise he could as well have made both the sides open! So he knows the purpose of that creation. Further, he finds in himself the skill to create. He has got the skill to create the pot. In fact the creator of anything has got the knowledge of what he creates and also has got the power, the skill of creating it.

When I observe this world, I find it is a useful creation. The sun, the moon, the earth; everything is useful. Nothing is redundant. If I feel something is useless, it is because I do not know its use. Even I am useful; at least at the time of election I become useful. The creation would be incomplete without me and that is why I am there. In this creation everything is useful; that is what a scientist is trying to

understand: what a particular thing or being is and how it is useful. He tries to understand the meaning of a set-up—whether it is a cellular system or a nuclear system. What does that accomplish? We discover that everything is so orderly. It is such a useful creation. My eyes are a useful creation because there are forms and colours to see. My ears are a useful creation because there are sounds to hear. The digestive system is a useful creation. I have not created any of them. None of us can boast of this creation. Even if I build a house, I must better know that it is not my creation. I may say I have created with my own hands; but the hands are not mine anyway. They were created. My mother and my father and even the cucumber that I eat can claim the authorship of those hands. And many other things can claim the ownership. What is it that I have got a claim over? Have I created the house? This land is not created by me, the bricks are not created by me. Even if I make bricks, the earth is not created by me. The fire that bakes the bricks is not created by me. The law “that the fire should be hot” is not created by me. “That the house is standing and not flying away” is not created by me. My God! Then what have I created? Nothing. Neither can I boast of this creation, nor can anybody else like me also boast of it. How can I create the world? I am an individual who is himself created. I come and go. Creation was there when I came and it will remain even after I go. No one who existed before or anyone who is here in the present can be the creator. Therefore the question naturally arises, “Who is the creator?”

The creator must have the knowledge of what he creates. The creator of pot knows the pot. So the creator of everything must have the knowledge of everything. He must be omniscient. He must be all knowledge.



## Where is God?

Now the question is, where is that omniscient one, the all intelligent being, whom we call *Īśvara* or God? Where is that God?

A child asked the mother, "Mum! Tell me, who created the sun?"

"God." She said.

"Mum! Tell me where is God?"

"He is in the heavens."

"In heavens! Did you see?"

"No. I did not go to heavens. I have yet to go."

"Then how do you know?"

"That is what people say. That is what our scriptures say—that God in heavens created the world."

"Then mum, tell me, who created the heavens?"

"God! Who else can create heavens? God created the heavens."

"Mum! Tell me, before the creation of the heavens where was God?"

"Shut up. Don't ask silly questions. Go and study."

The boy went away. He did not understand why this was considered a silly question and the boy thought over. He being a youngster could not give it up and therefore he went on thinking, trying to figure it out. One fine morning he came to the mother who was busy in the kitchen and said,

"Mum, I have figured out."

"What?" In the past she had learnt from the boy and so reluctantly she asked him, "What have you figured out?"

"I know where God was before He created the heavens."

"How?"

"Well, I know. You told me the other day that heaven and

hell are the two places up above. So before the creation of the heavens, God must have been in hell!"

The mother did not like the answer. How can God be in hell? But she had no other argument and so said, "O.K."

"Mum! you said that only bad people go to hell. Why should God be in hell? Was He so bad? If He is so bad, why do you worship Him?"

"Shut up."

If before the creation of heaven, God was in the hell, the question is still there. "Who created the hell and gave it to God?" If you say God created the hell, where was He before He created the hell? We have no answer. Nobody, none of these religions can answer these questions. You must be a Vedantin to answer this question.

## **The Material Cause**

Looking at any deliberate creation, let us say a cloth, I can appreciate that there must be an efficient cause, an intelligent being behind the creation of the cloth. It does not take a great intellect to understand that. But then there is an unfortunate omission on the part of those theologians who fail to recognise the second cause for the creation. What is the second cause for creation? The material cause. If I appreciate the material cause, if that is taken into account, then there is no problem:

The omniscient, all powerful God created this world. Accepted. Since the creation is complete, He might be almighty, all-powerful, all-knowledge. Now the question is, what is the material out of which He created the world?

Let us see wherefrom was the letter Z created. We may say that Z was created from Y. So Z from Y, Y from X, X



from W, W from V, V from U, U from T, T from S, S from R, R from Q, Q from P, P from O, O from N, N from M, M from L . . . . . and C from B, B from A. Now the question is from where was the material for A found? We have to say, 'from the Lord Himself.' It cannot be from outside because there is nothing outside the Lord. Even the "outside" is yet to be created and therefore the Lord is the efficient cause and also the material cause. This is what the *upanisads* says. Just as a spider creates (the web from himself) and folds up (unto himself), (So out of the Lord does the universe emerge).<sup>\*</sup> A spider who creates the web in a corner of a room is an intelligent being; he is intelligent enough to create the web and so the spider is the efficient cause for the creation of the web. And to get the thread for the web he does not have to go out to get the material, the substance from outside. Unlike a bird which goes out and picks up the straws and fibres to make its nest, the spider finds the substance in his own body in a gland out of which through a tube the secretion comes out in the form of a thread. Holding that one end, he goes up and down and creates a beautiful web, weaves the web. So who is the material cause for the web? It is Mr. Spider. And who again is the efficient cause for the web? Mr. Spider. So spider himself is both the efficient and the material causes for the web.

We will understand this better by the example of our dream world. Who is the creator of the dream world—the dream mountain and the streams and the rivers, and what not? Who created them all? I created the dream world, and so I am the creator of the dream world. And I created it just like that; I thought and it was there. And from where did I get the material for the mountains and rivers there in the dream? Did I go somewhere to collect it? No. Then I must be

\* यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च । (मु. उ. २-२-७)

the material cause too. My own memories are the material cause for the dream creation. Also I am the efficient cause for the dream creation. Beautiful. I am both the efficient as well as the material cause for the dream world.

Now see this. The Lord is the efficient and also the material cause. If He is the efficient and the material cause, where is the Lord now? Can the material cause ever be separate from the creation? Can cotton be separate from the cloth? No. The weaver, the efficient cause is different from the cloth. That is why when we buy textiles, we do not bring the weaver along! But where the effect is, there the material cause must be. The effect is the cloth. Where the cloth is, there the material cause, the cotton is. That is why however forgetful I may be, it is not possible that I leave the cotton behind and bring the cloth along!

I cannot forget to bring the clay when I bring the pot. Alongwith the pot, will come the clay, because pot is clay. The cotton is the cloth, cloth is cotton. So where the creation is, the material cause is. Now tell me, if the Lord is both the material and the efficient cause, where is the Lord? The Lord is space. The Lord is time. The Lord is moon, jupiter, mercury, saturn, mars. The Lord is the winds. The Lord is the earth. The Lord is the tree, the foliage, the flowers and the bees thereupon. The Lord is the cow. The Lord is the child. The Lord is man. The Lord is woman. The Lord is this hand. The Lord is this nose. The Lord is these eyes. The Lord is the thought behind these eyes. The Lord is the consciousness behind them all, behind the thought, behind the eyes, behind the creation, space, time, stars, galaxies, behind the whole thing. The Lord is behind everything. The Lord is everything and therefore where is God? Where is He not?



## Creator is Creation

That is why our God is happily married. I prostrate to Lord *Śiva* and Goddess *Pārvatī*, who are the parents of the creation.

Like a word and its meaning, the Goddess, the material cause and the God, the efficient cause are inseparable. Is there a creation without the material cause? The creation involves the material cause which is called *śakti*, the Goddess and efficient cause is called the *purusa*, *śiva*. *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, *Īśvara* and *māyā*. The creation is apparent as I told you, and so we must have an apparent cause for it.

This apparent cause is called *māyā*. That is the material. The whole creation is *Īśvara*. That is why one cannot appreciate Indian culture, unless one knows what *Īśvara* is. Our *Īśvara* is not up in the heaven. God cannot be outside the creation. God cannot be inside the creation. If He is inside the creation, how is He going to create? He should be outside the creation but there is no such thing as "outside" of the creation. Everything is inside creation. Space itself is a creation. Therefore God is . . . . . God is creation. That is God can be neither "inside" the creation nor "outside" the creation. Therefore there is nothing outside creation. Thus the reason why for a Hindu, the sun is God, the stars are God and any planet is also God. The earth is God, the tree is God, the bird is God. Everything is God for him. Mountain is God, water is God and air is God. Behind *Vayu* there is Lord. Behind the sun there is Lord. The sun is Lord and behind the sun is also Lord. Which symbol, which form is not God?

Suppose you want to touch me; and you touch my little finger. Would I feel that I have been touched only a little?

Again if you touch my middle finger, is it that I get a little more touch and if you pull my hand, a little more attention? In that case, to get my full attention, you should give me a massage! But this is not so. Even if you touch my little finger, you are touching me. I am equally present everywhere in the body and every part of the body is "I". Similarly any form is Lord's form and so I can see the Lord in any form.

People say that the Hindus are idolators, that they have many gods. But those who have only one God also have the one God plus the devotee because God is always taken to be different from the self. Whereas the Hindus have got only the God. The devotee is not different from Him. That is *advaita*. They, the *dvaitins*, (the dualists) have got one God plus man. They have made God an entity sitting somewhere in the heaven. But it does not make sense. If God is only one thing, He is not this, He is not that. If I am different from God then every living being and similarly inert things are also excluded from God. Then He must have His own physical body. Thus God becomes limited spatially. He becomes limited in power too. Because I have a certain power which he does not have. Every small little thing in the creation has got some power which is excluded from God and therefore He should be a limited entity like my big uncle, sitting somewhere! And then why should I worship Him? I also have got my ego and therefore I may ask Him to worship me for a change! This does not make sense because if He is limited, He cannot be called God.

The Lord is the creation. He cannot be apart from the creation. Every form is His form and every name is His name. And naturally therefore I can invoke Him in any name. I can invoke Him in any form. That is why we accept any form in which to worship God. I may not accept your concept of God, but I would accept your form of worship. God must know all languages. If we pray in Sanskrit He



should be able to understand. Of course Sanskrit is considered to be the language of gods. It is a well made language. But then He should be able to understand any language. Even without language also if we pray, He should be able to understand. Well, that is God and until I know Him, I worship Him in form.

### How many Gods?

I will relate to you a short little event from my personal experience. Once, as a *brahmacārī*, I was travelling from Delhi to Madras in a train. There were two other persons besides me in the compartment. I occupied one corner. The other two corners were occupied by the other two. The man who was sitting in the other corner of my seat was reading a book and the other person asked him,

"What are you reading?"

"Gita", he said.

"What is Gita?"

"Gita is a scripture."

"Who gave out this scripture?" he asked.

"Lord Krishna."

"Who is Lord Krishna?"

"He is God." God".

"What about Rama?"

"Rama also is God."

"What about Siva?"

"Siva also is God."

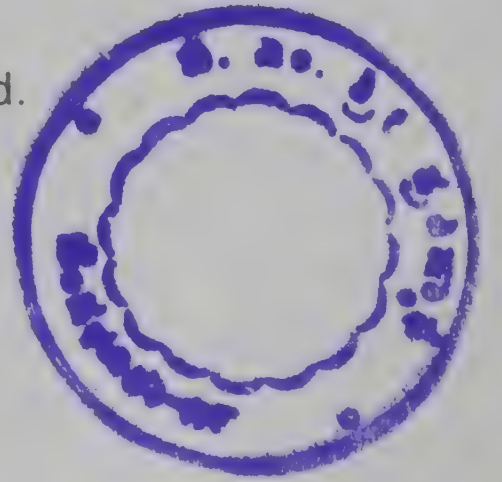
"What about Narayana?"

"Narayana also is God."

"Then what about Ganesha and all the rest?"

"They all are Gods."

"Ai, how many Gods have you got?"



This poor man did not know much. He said,

"We have got many Gods!"

"Don't you get confused?"

"I do not. In my pūjāroom I have got all the Gods. I show camphor-*ārati* to all of them. I have no problem, no confusion at all."

But the other man said, "It must be confusing."

"No sir, it does not confuse me at all."

"It has to be confusing", the other man insisted because he wanted to tell a story. Then, he said, "I will tell you a story. Please listen." And then he told a story. This he had been doing, I am sure, for a long time, an appointed missionary as he was. No reflection upon the person because it is common to all the missionaries. Even every Christian should know this and a Hindu also should know. All of us should know this. So then this missionary told a story.

Two persons happened to be travelling together. One of them was a Hindu and the other was a Christian. On the way there was a wide river. Neither of them knew swimming, but they discovered that there was only knee-deep water in the river. So they thought they could just cross it. They entered the water and started crossing that river. All of a sudden, as it happened, an upstream dam got burst; and there occurred a flash flood. The water started rising. It came upto the chest and then upto the neck. There was water this side and that side and everywhere. The fellows were going to get drowned. At that time the Hindu started praying, "O Rama! Where are you? Please come and help me."

Lord Rama heard this call and rushed to help the drowning man. But before Lord Rama could reach and save him the man lost patience and started calling Lord Krishna, "Oh Krishna! Please come and save me!" But before Lord Krishna could save him, he called out for Lord Siva. Before Lord Rama could come he prayed Lord Krishna for help, so



Lord Rama went away. Without waiting any more for Lord Krishna he prayed to Lord Siva. Thus one after another he called Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Siva, Lord Narayana, Lord Ganesha, and before anyone of them could actually reach and help him the man got drowned. On the other hand, this other man, the Christian prayed, "O Jesus! Please save me." And there came a log of wood floating in the river. He caught hold of the log and crossed the river (leaving the poor Hindu fellow drowning! That is my addition). The Christian crossed the river and for a Hindu because of these too many gods, there was a confusion.

When this story was concluded this Hindu, who was reading Gita, listening to the story, was in a corner. He felt greatly cornered. He had no answer to give. The Christian fellow, while telling the story, was also covering me, looking at me now and then. Now he looked at me very triumphantly and victoriously with a winning smile. I also smiled back and said to him, "That is an interesting story." "Yes", he said and came towards me. As a *brahmacari* with a beard and a peculiar dress, I should be a real catch for him. So he sat before me and said, "See, what a confusion there is! It is all conflict when there are so many gods!"

Then I said, "It is really an interesting story. When did this happen?"

He said, "well . . . well I . . . I . . ."

I said, "O.K. Don't bother. Let us say it happened on a Friday at four o'clock. If it was any other day, any other time, then also it is all right with me."

"O.K. Go ahead" he said.

Then I asked him, "How many Christians are there in the world?"

"O . . . there are millions . . ."

"OK. Now let us say, on this Friday at four o'clock, there was, in London a man who was knocked down by a car in

the street and was crying, 'O Jesus, please save me!' There was also another person who was attacked by somebody in the streets of Paris, and that fellow, a faithful Christian also called out, 'O God Jesus, please save me.' And at the same time, Friday, four o'clock in South Africa, Johannesburg, there was a woman in the maternity hospital in great pain. She also cried, 'O God save me. O Jesus, save me.' Please tell me, where will Jesus go? If he goes to save one person, the others will die! On the other hand, look at the Hindu gods. If Lord Rama goes to save the Brahmin in India, Lord Krishna can rush to save the man in England and Lord Siva in Paris and Lord Ganesha would go to South Africa! Isn't it really wonderful to have many gods who can come to the rescue, rather than being confined to only one!"

Friends, I must admit one thing. My logic is not particularly sound. In fact it is more ridiculous than his. But when someone talks ridiculous, you have to act more ridiculous. That is all that is required in this kind of confrontation. Whether you call Him Jesus or you call Him Krishna, if Lord wants to save you, will He take time? To say that He came-and He saved... all that is nonsense. I say, we may have any number of Gods. God is in every form and I can worship Him in any form.

A finger is just a finger. The little finger can be looked upon as a small part or aspect of the body. But the same finger becomes a means, by touching which, someone can draw my attention. The whole of my personality can be called to attention by merely touching my little finger. Similarly a particular aspect of creation is called *devata*, a deity, and the same *devata* can be a form in which we can invoke the whole Lord. That is how it is. And therefore the "many" gods are only different aspects of the same Lord and the same Lord is invoked through all the deities just as the same person is invoked by contacting or worshipping any



part of the body. There is only one God.

## VI. THE IDENTITY

### Advaita, The Truth

The Lord is the creation. The physical creation is He. The thoughts are also the Lord. The consciousness behind the creation, behind the thoughts is *satya*, the Truth, which is also the Truth of the Lord. It is the Truth of myself, which alone is the Truth of everything and therefore there is only one Lord that there is. Where is another Lord, I would like to know? Until this truth is discovered, I need an altar where I can place my head and invoke the Lord, the almighty, the all-powerful, the all-knowledge. I invoke that Lord in any given form, call it Rama, Krishna, Siva, or Ganesha, to invoke His grace, His blessings, so that I can come to know that there is only one Lord. In the beginning, I worship the Lord who is everything and then I discover the fact that I am everything. This is *advaita*. It is not Shankara's *advaita*. Please understand. It is what our *upanisads* reveal. There were philosophers who had their own schools of thoughts but Shankara did not have a school of thought. *Advaita* is the fact; it is the Truth, which cannot be shaken by anybody, nor can it be improved upon by anyone. No one can tell me his God is more than limitless. On the other hand, we cannot accept a Lord who is less than limitless because it is against the experience of life. Until you are free from limitation, you will never rest content. Like the river finding her level, until she reaches the ocean, she cannot rest content. She cannot reconcile that there is a dam, and that she need not flow any further. She keeps on exerting her pressure on the dam, she raises her level and does whatever is necessary until she can



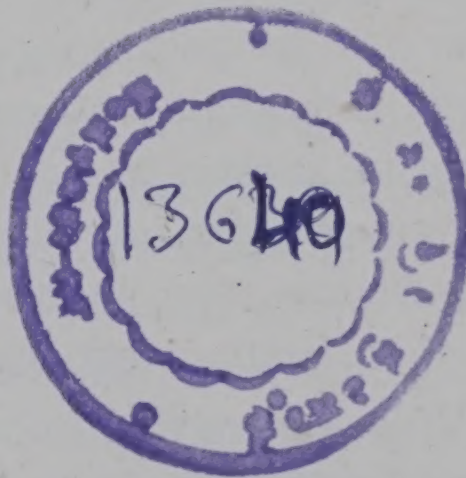
flow further, until she can continue her journey to the ocean. Thus she goes on all the time, because until the river reaches the ocean, until she has the vision of ocean, the flow does not stop. Understand, the river has to lose her name and form:

"As flowing rivers get themselves disappeared in the ocean losing their special names and distinct forms . . . . ."

(M. U. 3-2-8).

Giving up all the name and form she has to become one with the ocean. Once upon a time she was Ganga, Jamuna etc. but now that individuality is dissolved in the identity with the ocean.

Similarly every individual's heart is yearning for that freedom from limitations, a limitation which he has imposed upon himself due to ignorance and error rather than by a fact. And so the one who owns up this knowledge, that man alone is called a wise man. Until then everybody is "otherwise" and the otherwise has got to become wise. And therefore we invoke the Lord, sing His glories, sing His praise. What is wrong in that? His grace will bless me and will fill up my heart and make me see that I and the Lord are but one.





human ~~human~~ being has a sense of Identity  
I am/so and so etc.  
but animals don't have

---

The tomorrow will always be playing  
I. I. I.

Rogers change

The 'I' is constant the circumstances  
change

I world is always changing

boy, youth etc changes but I am <sup>remembering</sup> ~~same~~



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